ASOKA'S EDICTS

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In Bengali

Buddhakathā

Aśokalipi

Rājagṛha o Nālandā

Jainadharma

ASOKA'S EDICTS

BY

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PREFACE

THE English writer H. G. Wells considered Asoka to be one of the Six Greatest Men of history, and yet Humanity outside of Asia did not know anything about him a little over 100 years ago. Even in Asia he had become a legendary figure. But the glory of his personality was specially recognised in Buddhist countries. In the Sanskrit literature of Mahayana Buddhism as rendered into Tibetan and Chinese, and in the Pali literature of Hinayana Buddhism, Asoka has his place well-established as a great king and patron of Buddhism.

But the real Asoka, the human Asoka, was lost to history. He had left behind him quite a number of inscriptions which set forth his ideals and his efforts to bring about a rule of *Dharma* or Righteousness in his empire, and to spread this *Dharma* among his neighbours all round him. These inscriptions were wholly lost sight of in India. The script and the language in which they were written became forgotton in India, and unfortunately no memory of it was preserved in literature.

In India, and outside India too, we are eternally grateful to the curiosity of Europe about the doings of man everywhere—to the great Humanity of Europe—in bringing us back the historical Asoka by discovering, reading, translating and disseminating the inscriptions which form the most precious relic of this great man. It was in 1838, just 118 years ago, that James Prinsep, the English Scholar, was enabled to read the script of

Asoka's inscriptions, the Brahmi, first with the help of bi-lingual coins of the Indo-Greek rulers of North West India giving their names in both Greek and Brahmi characters. Bit by bit the masses of inscriptions which were left by Asoka came to be discovered, edited and translated, and this process has continued right down to our time—even a short while ago discoveries of fragments of Asoka's inscriptions were made in different parts of India.

These inscriptions are of paramount importance in the study of ancient Indian History and its life, thought and culture. They have made the great emperor of India live in flesh and blood, as it were, in our midst once again. The discovery of these inscriptions and their study have only re-affirmed his glory, and the esteem in which he has been held by the Buddhist world for so many centuries, although under a veil of legend and tradition.

Scholars after Prinsep busied themselves with the interpretation of Asoka's inscriptions, and they came from all the civilised countries, from Europe, from America and from India. The great English Indologist and the Father of Indian Archaeology, Sir Alexander Cunningham, studied the Asoka inscriptions, and after him came Emil Sénart, the eminent French Indologist, who brought out in 1885, in two magnificient volumes, a complete edition of the inscriptions of Asoka with the original text, printed both in a special fount of Brahmi type which he had prepared and in a Roman transcription, and French translation and full commentary, historical and linguistic. After that, editions of the Asoka inscriptions and commentaries on them have come out in a steady flow: and the present work is the most recent one in this line.

With the study of the inscriptions of Asoka, the greatness of Asoka the man has come out and Asoka has once again evoked unstinted praise from all who have had occasion to come in touch through these inscriptions with this great leader of men, who sought to bring peace and happiness to man through moral regeneration. In 1890 the distinguished Indian Administrator and Historian, Novelist and Thought-Leader, Romesh Chunder Dutt, wrote about Asoka as follows (in his "History of Civilisation in Ancient India", Vol. III) :

"No greater Prince had ever reigned in India since the Aryans first colonised this country, and no succeeding Monarch equalled his glory, if we only except Vikramaditya of the 6th century and the great Akbar of the 16th century. But the claims of Asoka to greatness rested not on the extent of his empire and of his prowess but on the liberal and catholic spirit which inspired his internal administration, foreign policy, and the fervent love of truth, and the desire to spread the truth, which has made his name a household word from Siberia to Ceylon. No Monarch of India, not even Vikramaditya or Akbar, has such a world-wide reputation, and none has exerted such influence on the history of the world by his zeal for righteousness and virtue".

In 1920 H.G. Wells declared Asoka to be one of the six greatest men of history (the others being Buddha, Socrates, Aristotle, Roger Bacon and Abraham Lincoln), and he wrote about Asoka (in his "Outline of History") in the following terms :

"Asoka (264-227 B.C.) was one of the greatest monarchs of history whose dominions extended from Afghanistan to what is now the province of Madras. He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory. He had invaded Kalinga (225 B. C.),

a country along the east coast of Madras, perhaps with some intention of completing the conquest of the tip of the Indian Peninsula. The expedition was successful, but he was disgusted by what he saw of the cruelties and horrors of war. He declared, in certain inscriptions that still exist, that he would no longer seek conquest by war, but by religion, and the rest of his life was devoted to the spreading of Buddhism throughout the world.

"He seems to have ruled his vast empire in peace and with great ability. He was no mere religious fanatic. But in the year of his one and only war he joined the Buddhist community as a layman, and some years later he became a full member of the Order, and devoted himself to the attainment of Nirvana by the Eightfold Path. How entirely compatible that way of living then was with the most useful and beneficent activities, his life shows. Right Aspiration, Right Effort and Right Livelihood distinguished his career. He organised a great digging of wells in India, and the planting of trees for shade. He appointed officers for the supervision of charitable works. He founded hospitals and public gardens. He had gardens made for the growing of medicinal herbs. Had he had an Aristotle to inspire him, he would no doubt have endowed scientific research upon a great scale. He created a Ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races. He made provision for the education of women. He made—he was the first Monarch to make—an attempt to educate his people into a common view of the ends and way of life. He made vast benefactions to the Buddhist teaching Orders, and tried to stimulate them to a better study of their own literature. All over the land he set up long inscriptions rehearsing the teaching of Gautama, and it is the simple and human teaching and not the preposterous accretions. Thirty-five of his inscriptions survive to this

day. Moreover, he sent missionaries to spread the noble and reasonable teachings of his Master throughout the world, to Kashmir, to Ceylon, to the Seleucids and the Ptolemies.

"For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, like a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne".

The above statement from a just and a balanced historian of the human race gives in brief an outline of what Asoka did and what he stood for. The man Asoka speaks out from his inscriptions, and these inscriptions have a perennial human interest, apart from their special interest for the history of the Indian man. They narrate, in plain and simple and unadorned language, which at the same time breathes a deep sincerity and earnestness, some of the desires, aspirations and strivings of a great ruler of men. They are in the spoken Middle Indo-Aryan dialects of ancient India, which were based on old Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit. They form by themselves quite a handbook of moral and spiritual striving which in its entirety can be looked upon as a great book, not only for India but also for the whole of Humanity. It is a book of the type of Marcus Aurelius's "Meditations". Though not in their mystic content and outlook, but yet in their sincerity and spiritual striving, the inscriptions can be compared even with the earlier Upanishads and the Tao-Teh-King of Lao-tsze.

The inscriptions of Asoka are unique in their way as epigraphs left by a great emperor. They have a tremendous documentary value, as giving a contemporary expression to the ideas which were moving men and women in a vast country for an entire epoch. The inscriptions of Asoka would evoke a comparison with those of the Achaemenian Emperors of Ancient Persia, the Orkhon inscription (dating from the 8th century A.D.) of the Turki Ruler Kul-Tegin and his brother, the inscriptions of the Burmese King Kyan-cac-Sāḥ (or Kyanzittha) of the 11th century, and that of the Thai King Rama Gamheng of the 13th century.

Asoka faithfully followed the great prescription of his Master, viz. Buddha himself, that people should be approached in the matter of spiritual truths in their own languages. His message to his people, in a similar spirit, was also couched in the various local dialects of North India. There are in the main four dialects of Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakrit which Asoka has used in his inscriptions : one of the North-West, one of the South-West, one of the Himalayan regions, and one of the Gangetic Plains. This last one is primarily that of the Eastern parts of his Empire—it is based on the Old Prachya or Eastern Speech from which both the later Magadhi and Ardha-Magadhi Prakrits evolved ; and it is rather curious to find that he does not use the dialect of the Midland proper, viz. Western Uttar Pradesh and Eastern Panjab, which later became Sauraseni Prakrit. Possibly in his time this Prachya or Eastern Prakrit was also well understood in the Madhya-desa or the Midland country, the home of Sauraseni.

It is a thousand pities that Asoka or rather the officials in the Secretariat in his Capital Pataliputra or Patna in Bihar did not think of using any of the non-Aryan

languages of India. There were probably two reasons for this. Possibly in the Capital at Pataliputra there was no one in the State Offices who was familiar with a non-Aryan speech; and besides, with the exception of the Dravidian speeches of the South, probably there was no literary life in the non-Aryan speeches.

A scrupulons faithfulness in reproducing some details of the Aryan dialects of his time, however, gives to Asoka's inscriptions as we have them a most unique linguistic value. As it has been stated, the specimens in these inscriptions in their various dialectal forms furnish us with a sort of "Linguistic Survey" of North India for the 3rd century B.C. Specialists have always been occupied with Asoka's inscriptions and their language as studies of primary importance in Indo-Aryan Philology.

The alphabet which Asoka has used in the bulk of his inscriptions (excepting in those of the North-West), viz. the Brahmi alphabet, is the ultimate source of all the different native scripts of India, and also of some countries outside India like Ceylon and Tibet, Ancient Central Asia and Burma, Cambodia and Siam, and of the various areas in Indonesia including the Philippines. The other kind of writing, the Kharoshthi, is palpably of foreign origin, being a modification of the Ancient Syrian writing as it was current in the Persian Empire, and this Kharoshthi, although it was in vigorous use in the language of North-Western India for a good many centuries and was taken by Indian Colonists into Central Asia (what is now Chinese-Turkistan), has now become extinct. Asoka's Brahmi is in all likelihood derived from the latest phase of the ancient pre-Aryan script of India which we find in Mohen-jo-Daro and other sites in Western and North-Western India. Both these scripts have a beautiful statuesque quality, with a simple and stately dignity even—

which we find in the phonetic scripts in Western Asia and Eastern Europe of that period, e.g. the Old Himyaritic and the Old Phoenician in its various forms, the Old Greek and the Early Latin.

But the language and style of the Asoka inscriptions is still a little halting and not yet fully developed, as is also the orthography which is not always very sure of itself. But the simplicity of Asoka's prose recalls the prose of the Upanishads and of portions of the Mahabharata. There are certain Old Persian influences in the style, including a number of Old Persian words. But in spite of its being occasionally a little hesitating in its flow, Asoka's language has a remarkable stateliness which quite pleases us, and this reflects the character of the author himself. For certainly Asoka himself was responsible for the first draft, either dictated by the Monarch himself or written out by himself, since the contents of the edicts are so very intimately personal that it could not have been otherwise. The style is the man, and here the style of the inscriptions also reveals the man Asoka.

I need not deal with other aspects of the edicts. The Editor, Dr. A. C. Sen, has treated them in the present volume from various points of view. The inscriptions did not make very easy reading at first; and in spite of over 100 years of close application to it by first-rate scholars of Europe and India, there are still a few places where the interpretation is not yet satisfactory. New interpretations are of course waited for to make the sense crystal clear, which must happen ultimately. But one need not go into details of these. The value of the inscriptions for the average man is in their sum total, and the sense of this is quite clear.

This sum total is, of course, in Asoka's ideal of *Dharma* or Righteousness in Life. The salient character of his *Dharma* has been expressed by Asoka in more places than one, and Dr. Sen has also sought to summarise the nature of Asoka's *Dharma.* One thing may be noted—and it was, as far as I remember, the late Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi who first drew our attention to it. Asoka followed the doctrine of Buddha. But what actually the deepest conviction of Buddha about the Unseen Reality that is behind life was, we do not know. His *Nirvāṇa,* which is the ultimate goal to be achieved by man, does not appear to have been a negative state of annihilation—it was a state which was positive and which was full of bliss (*Nibbāṇaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*). This *Nirvāṇa* could be attained after the human personality had achieved a blissful state of existence which has been expressed as *Brahma-vihāra* or "Moving about in Brahman." For *Brahma-vihāra,* which can be looked upon as an expression from the Vedanta of the earlier Upanishads, one must cultivate *Karuṇā* or Universal Charity, *Maitrī* or Active Good-doing for All, *Muditā* (or *Mṛdutā*) i.e. Gentleness as well as Spirit of Happiness, and *Upekṣā* or Ignoring any Ill-will or Ill-deeds against oneself. Buddha was looked upon as an agnostic, and even as one who did not believe in any Supreme Spirit or Being,—as one who believed only in the Void and Emptiness (*Śūnyatā*). This is the view of the Hinayana Buddhism.

But Mahayana, which is generally looked upon as a later development of Buddhism, certainly goes quite contrary to these ideas. Mahayana, in many respects, is like the Vedanta of the Upanishads, and the Mahayana Buddhism is also suffused with the spirit of *Bhakti* or Faith in a Personal Deity. Mahayana Buddhism also lays a very great stress on the saving power of the

Bodhisattvas, persons who are attaining to the position of a Supreme Buddha with the highest knowledge (*Bodhi*), but who have taken upon themselves the burden of leading all living creatures to salvation by placing before the people the example of their own lives. In his Rock Edict No. 10, Asoka seems to be guided by the same Bodhisattva ideal of the Mahayana.

From the Asoka inscriptions, one thing becomes clear, that his Buddhism is based not on the Pali Buddhism of the Hinayaṇa, nor again on the Sanskrit Buddhism of the Mahayana. Sylvain Lévi and Heinrich Lueders have shown that the oldest texts of Buddhism were in a dialect which flourished before the formation of the Pali and the Sanskrit canons of the Hinayana and the Mahayana respectively, and this dialect was an eastern dialect (Pali really belongs to the Midland) which was very much like that of the Eastern inscriptions of Asoka. This eastern dialect appears to have been the actual speech of Buddha himself, and when Asoka has quoted from and referred in one of his Edicts to the Buddhist texts as he knew them, he has quoted them in this eastern dialect. For the evaluation of primitive Buddhism, the importance of the Asoka inscriptions can also be gauged from the fact that an earlier basis for the Buddhist canon than the Hinayana Pali or the Mahayana Sanskrit (or Central Asian Prakrit) can be postulated from these inscriptions.

There have been published some very good editions of the inscriptions of Asoka in different languages. Long ago, among the Indian languages Bengali was the first to get the inscriptions of Asoka (in some of the dialectal versions though not in their entirety) together with a Bengali translation and notes, from the pen of the late Charu Chandra Basu, whose edition of the Pali *Dhammapada*

with Sanskrit equivalents and Bengali translation was an epoch-making book in Bengali for the popularisation of Pali studies. There were other Indian editions, e.g. by Pandit Janardan Bhatta in Hindi and of the late Pandit Ram Avatar Sarma. The Calcutta University edition of the text was followed by a much fuller edition, highly valuable linguistically, from the late Dr. A. C. Woolner, when he was Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University. The convenient edition, as published by the Theosophical Society, Madras, from the Adyar Library in 1951, under the inspiration of the late Shri C. Jinarajadasa, giving Asoka's text with Sanskrit equivalents and English translation and notes, is also very handy. Sometime before his death Prof. Jules Bloch of Paris brought out an exceedingly useful edition, with the Romanised Text (with certain emendations seeking to give the actual pronunciation in some cases) on one page and a French translation on the page opposite.

Dr. A. C. Sen brought out some time ago, an edition in Bengali with the text in Bengali characters and a Bengali translation and commentary. And now we have the present edition from his pen which offers to English readers the text with a Sanskrit version below—both printed in a beautiful thick fount of Roman type which pleases the eye and makes reading easy—and English translation opposite, of this great document.

There are of course the Standard Works of the earlier scholars, giving the corpus of the inscriptions, like those of Sir Alexander Cunningham, Emil Sénart, and finally of E. Hultzsch in his Magnum Opus in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* published in 1925 by the Government of India.

Dr. A. C. Sen's book is published when India and all the Buddhist countries of the world as well as scholars

interested in Indian thought and culture all over the world are celebrating the 2500th anniversary of the passing away (*Mahā-parinirvāṇa*) of Buddha. One of his sincerest disciples, who was enabled to spread the teachings of his Master far and wide among the sons of men, was Asoka. There is thus some fitness in this work being published on this auspicious occasion.

I trust this will be of great help in spreading the message of Buddha, and of Asoka, which is also the message of India, with its appeal for all thoughtful and right-thinking men, men who have nothing but love for their fellow human beings, and who aim to attain to the Ultimate Reality through love and charity.

Calcutta
24.5.1956 — Suniti Kumar Chatterji
(Buddha-Pūrṇimā).

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Inscriptions of Aśoka

Aśoka's inscriptions are usually called Edicts but they are really not so in the strict sense of the term which signifies the commands of a legal overlord, breach whereof entails penalties. Aśoka's inscriptions, properly speaking, are proclamations, sermons and exhortations.

The principal source of what authentic history knows of Aśoka, is his inscriptions. Buddhist or Purāṇic legends about him are not fully reliable. But engraved on stone, these Inscriptions could not be added to, subtracted from or altered through the ages in the way oral tradition and manuscripts usually are. There are again, statements made in these Inscriptions which are of such a personal character as could hardly have been put into the mouth of his sovereign by any minister or secretary of state. In fact these records were composed under Aśoka's own direction and much of their phraseology was his own, taken down by official scribes, to which were added some further formalities before despatching them to be engraved at different places.

Except in the east and in the extreme south, one or other of these Inscriptions has been found in many parts of India. It is not unlikely that some Inscriptions remain yet undiscovered, as did until recent times those of Yerrāguḍi (discovered in 1929), Pālkīguṇḍu and Gavīmaṭh (discovered in 1931), and of Rajula-Maṇḍagiri and Gujarra (discovered in 1954). It is also certain that some further Aśokan inscriptions now entirely lost, did once exist, *e. g.* the Rājagṛha Pillar Inscription seen by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century. Aśoka erected not only the inscribed pillars still surviving, but also many more at places associated with the life of Buddha, such as those seen by the Chinese pilgrims in Rājagṛha, Śrāvastī etc, of which no trace now remains. Inscribed pillars were very probably set up by him in all the principal cities of his empire as well, such as Pāṭaliputra, Ujjayinī, Takṣaśilā etc, although none of them has survived.

Aśoka's inscriptions were meant primarily as instructions and exhortations to his officials and successors. Before we take up the study

of the Inscriptions, we may summarise very briefly the result of researches up-to-date by scholars on some important matters relating thereto.

2. Classification of the Inscriptions

According to their contents, extent and the surface whereon they are engraved, the Inscriptions may be thus classified :

A. *On Rocks or Stone Slabs*—

Minor Rock Edict (MRE) ;

Fourteen Rock Edicts (RE) ;

Two Separate Kaliṅga Rock Edicts (SKRE) ;

Bairāṭ Buddhist Texts Edict (BBTE)—usually called the Bhābrū Edict.

B. *On Pillars*—

Lumbinī Pillar Inscription (LPI) ;

Nigālīsāgar Pillar Inscription (NPI) ;

Schism Pillar Edict (SPE) ;

Allahabad Pillar Queen's Gifts Edict (APQGE)—usually called the Queen's Edict ;

Seven Pillar Edicts (PE).

C. *On Cave-walls*—

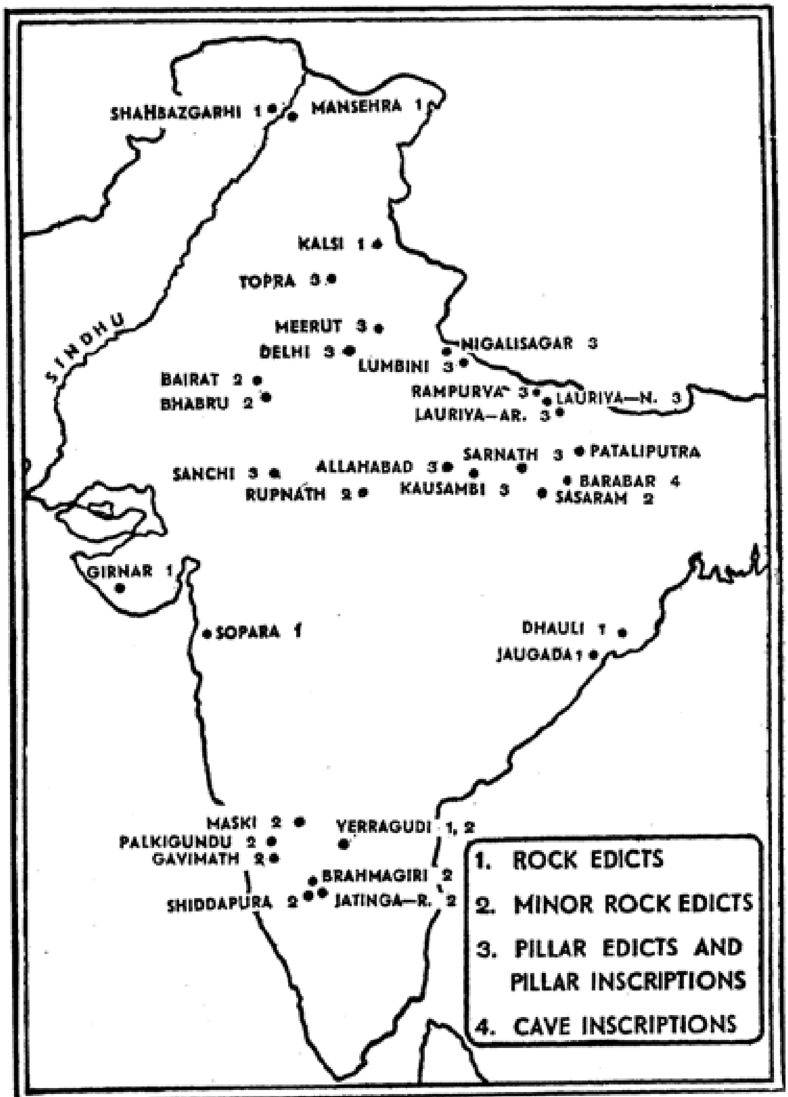
Two (or Three) Barābar Cave Inscriptions (BCI).

In the following pages, the Inscriptions have been dealt with in the order of their chronology, sometimes conjectural of course.

3. Find-places of the Inscriptions

Many Inscriptions belonging to the same class have been found in more than one place, with some variations in the readings of the text. The find-places of the various inscriptions are as follows :

Allahabad (-Kauśāmbī ?)—PE, SPE, APQGE.
Bairāṭ—MRE, BBTE.
Barābar—BCI
Brahmagiri—MRE
Delhi (-Meerut)—PE
Delhi (-Toprā)—PE
Dhaulī—RE, SKRE
Gavīmaṭh—MRE
Girnār—RE
Gujarra—MRE
Jaṭiṅga-Rāmeśvar—MRE
Jaugaḍa—RE, SKRE
Kālsī—RE
Kauśāmbī—see Allahabad
Lauḍiya-Ararāj—PE
Lauḍiya-Nandangarh—PE
Lumbinī—LPI
Mānsehrā—RE
Maskī—MRE



Map 1—Find-places of Aśoka's Inscriptions.

Gujarra and Rajula-Mṇḍagiri, both having MRE, are not shown in this Map ; see *intro.* to the chapter on MRE for these two places.

Meerut—see Delhi
Nigālīsāgar—NPI
Pālkīguṇḍu—MRE
Rajula-Maṇḍagiri—MRE
Rāmpūrvā—PE
Rūpnāth—MRE
Sahasrām—MRE
Sānchī—SPE
Sārnāth—SPE
Shāhbāzgarhī—RE
Śiddāpura—MRE
Sopārā—RE
Toprā—see Delhi
Yerrāguḍi—RE, MRE.

In the following pages, details regarding the find-places of different Inscriptions have been given in the *intro.* to chapters dealing with the various classes of the inscriptions.

4. The Script of the Inscriptions

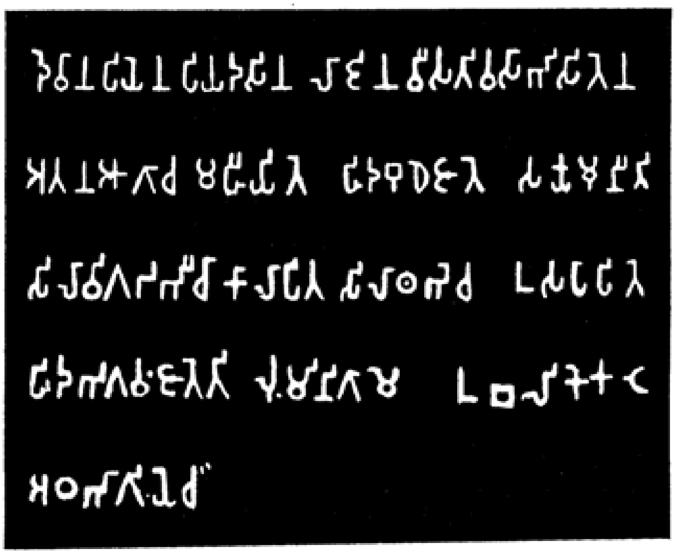
Except the REs at Mānsehrā and Shāhbāzgarhī which are written in Kharoṣṭhī script, all the other Inscriptions are written in Old Brāhmī script.

Some are of the view that Kharoṣṭhī evolved out of the Aramaic script used in general official work—as distinct from and much simpler than the Cuneiform used in the Behistun Inscriptions and similar other public records—by the scribes of king Darius of Persia. This is not impossible as close contacts existed between Persia and North-West India in those days—regions west of the Indus having frequently been included in the Achaemenian empire since the days of Cyrus the Great (6th cent. B.C). Indian commentators derived the term Kharoṣṭhi from Sansk. *khara* + *oṣṭha* or 'ass-lip' due perhaps to the curved character of the script, which is fanciful. The word is to be derived from a Semitic word found in Hebrew as *kharośeth* = 'writing'. The honour of deciphering the Kharoṣṭhī script belongs to Prinsep, Lassen, Norris and Cunningham. Before the discovery of the Shāhbāzgarhī and Mānsehrā Inscriptions however, a number of Kharoṣṭhī letters had already been read from bilingual coins of the Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian kings. Kharoṣṭhī is written from right to left and in it long vowels are replaced by short vowels.

As the mainland of India was not so much used to stone-sculpturing or stone-engraving in Aśoka's time, it is possible that the incising of some of Aśoka's inscriptions was done by North-Westerners who were more familiar with Kharoṣṭhī than with Brāhmī (cf. the Kharoṣṭhī masons' marks of Bharhut). This might explain why the engraver of MRE at Brahmagiri, Śiddāpura and Jaṭiṅga-

Rāmeśvar added his own name at the end of the inscriptions and wrote the last word in these inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, as a mark of his having been to a new place. That all these three Mysore inscriptions were engraved by the same man, also indicates perhaps that workmen for the purpose were scarce in that region.

The origin of the Brāhmī script is uncertain. Some think that it too originated from ancient Semitic scripts, while others hold that it originated from the script found on the 'seals' of the prehistoric Indus Valley civilisation although the intermediate stages of this evolution are not yet available. The Old Brāhmī script is the mother of most of the scripts now current in India. It was written from left to right whereas there are good reasons to think that the Indus Valley script (not yet deciphered) was written from right to left. It is to be noted in connection with the term 'Indus Valley' civilisation that as the present state of our knowledge based on further discoveries shows, this civilisation extended much further north, east and south beyond the valley of the Indus and that it had also traits other than those predominant at Harappā or Mohenjo-daro.



Aśoka's inscription on the Lumbinī Pillar marking the place of Buddha's birth.

The latter portion of the Yerrāguḍi version of MRE was at first supposed to have been written in the boustrophedon style, in which successive lines begin alternately from left and right. This style of writing was prevalent in ancient Greece and there are indications to suggest that it was probably practised in the writing of the Indus Valley too. It is doubtful however, if boustrophedon was really adopted at Yerrāguḍi; what seemed at first to be boustrophedon was, in fact, due to the carelessness, errors and inexperience of the illiterate engraver.

Except for a few at Kālsī, Sahasrām and Maskī, the other Inscriptions are written without any marks to separate words and clauses. Modern scholars have introduced punctuation, paragraphing etc in reading the Inscriptions, although they are not always agreed on this matter, leading consequently to divergence in interpretation.

The decipherment (in 1837) of the Brāhmī script was due to the labours and ingenuity of Prinsep whose efforts succeeded partly through the following fortunate guess. While studying facsimiles of numerous small inscriptions (which are of course post-Aśokan) on the railings of Sānchī, Prinsep was struck at their all terminating with the same *two letters*. The extreme brevity and insulated positions of these small inscriptions showed Prinsep that they could not be parts of a continuous text and he surmised that they must be obituary notices or more probably the offerings and presents of votaries, as he had seen to be the custom in the Buddhist temples of Ava in Burma where banners, flagstaffs, images and small *caityas* are crowded round the central shrine, each bearing the name of the donor. Prinsep also noticed the frequent occurrence before the final word, of a letter already set down incontestably as corresponding to स, *sa* which he had only a day or two earlier learnt from the decipherment of Saurāṣṭra coins to be one sign of the genitive case singular (=Sk. *-sya*; Pali *-ssa*). '(Of so and so) the *gift*' must then be the form of each brief sentence, thought Prinsep, and the vowel sign *ā* and the *anusvāra* led to the speedy recognition of the word दानं, *dānaṃ*, 'gift' which taught him the very two letters, *d* and *n*, most different from forms known till then, which had foiled him most in his former attempts. With his intimate knowledge of and long acquaintance with all varieties of ancient Indian alphabets, he could now name most of the remaining letters in those small Sānchī inscriptions at

once on re-inspection. "In the course of a few minutes I thus became," says Prinsep, "possessed of the whole alphabet which I tested by applying it to the (Aśokan) inscription on the Delhi (-Toprā) column".



A section of Aśoka's Rock Edicts at Girnār.

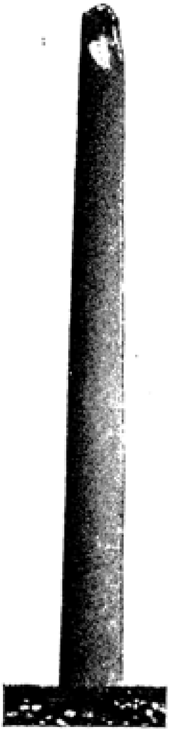
The letters, the mode of adding vowel signs to or of joining consonants etc are not uniform in all the different regional versions of Aśoka's inscriptions, although the forms intended are not difficult to recognise. The Inscriptions again are mostly damaged, defaced or worn out and it required enormous labours on the part of scholars to reconstruct the readings by comparison of the different versions.

Further, the engravers made innumerable errors in cutting the letters, signs, words etc—a fact noted by Aśoka himself in RE 14—as are common with copyists of manuscripts as well. Repetitions as well as omissions too are not infrequent on the part of Aśoka's engravers. The texts of the Inscriptions adopted in the following pages are in their emended form, and engravers' errors have been noted only in a very few cases. In the PEs which were issued towards the end of Aśoka's reign, engravers' errors are far less in evidence, due probably to more care having been taken for their prevention as a result of the experience of the earlier Inscriptions. The text adopted in the following pages of those Inscriptions of which more than one version is available, is the version that is less damaged than the others, and in such texts too, some damaged portions have to be supplied from other versions. Some versions of some of the Inscriptions, it will be noticed, have some 'postscript' matter which is absent from other versions of the same Inscription. These 'postscripts' were not really meant for engraving, for they were merely instructions to the local authorities regarding the engraving or publicising of the edicts. Some local authorities however, did not distinguish between the edict proper and the 'postscript', and engraved in full all that they received from the imperial secretariat.

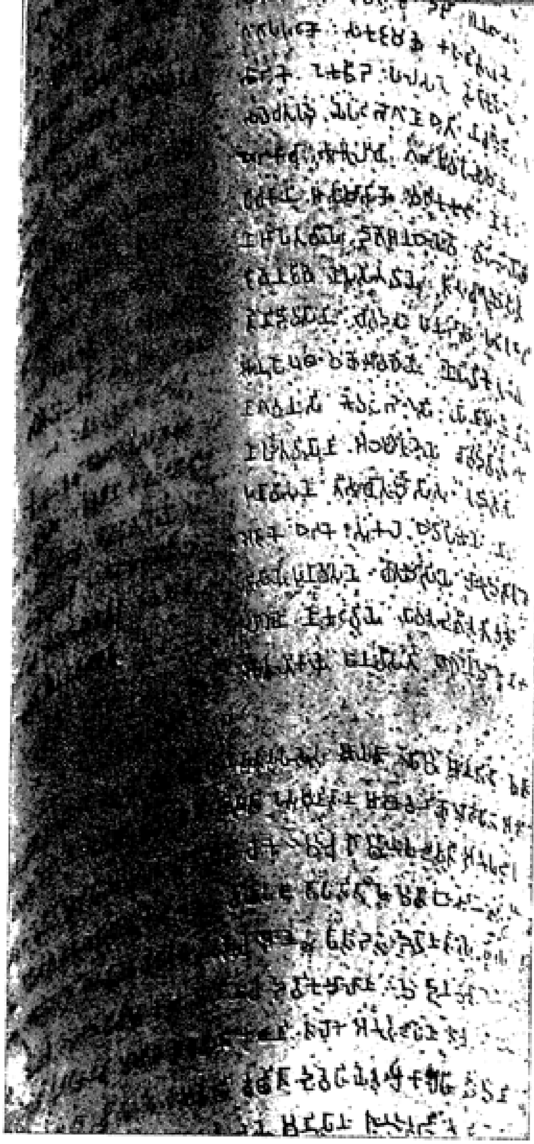
5. The Language of the Inscriptions

The language of the Aśokan inscriptions is Prakrit. But as it is not quite the same as any of the other literary forms known of Prakrit, it has been called Aśokan Prakrit or Prakrit of the Aśoka Inscriptions. It has affinities with Māgadhī Prakrit. The language of the Girnār version of the REs is close to Pali.

It would appear from a comparison of the language of different regional versions of the Inscriptions that the originals thereof were composed in the 'official' Prakrit used in the imperial secretariat at Pāṭaliputra, which were sent to various Provincial capitals where the local secretariats translated the original documents word by word, as far as possible, into the *local* 'official' Prakrits. It would further appear that owing to the dominant political position of Magadha since the days of Aśoka's grandfather Candragupta Maurya, different forms of the Māgadhī Prakrit in official use at the centre of the empire served as the official language of the various Provincial capitals as well, with local variations in spelling, grammar and vocabulary. There



Above—Delhi-Toprā Asoka Pillar

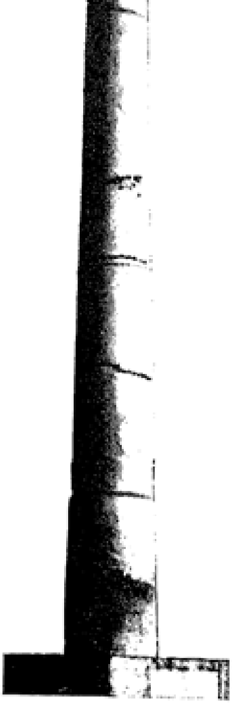


Left—Inscription on same

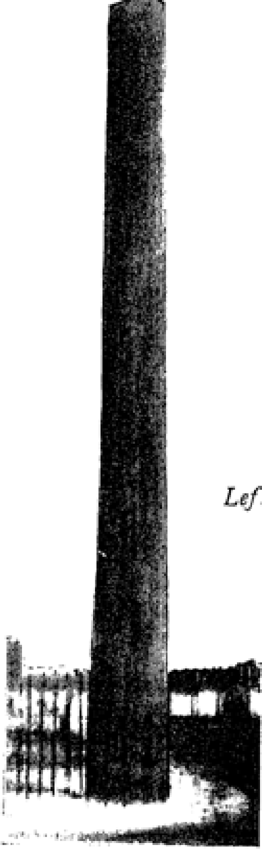
Below—Asoka's Minor Rock Edict at Brahmagiri (Mysore)



Four Asoka Pillars—
1. Delhi-Meerut
2. Lumbinī
3. Lauḍiyā-Ararāj
4. Lauḍiyā-Nandangarh

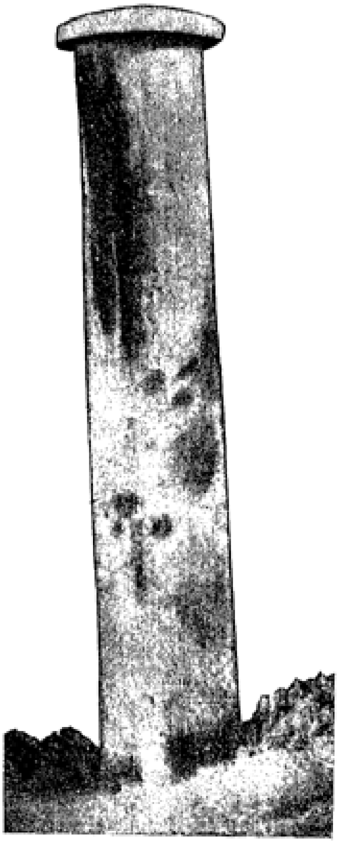


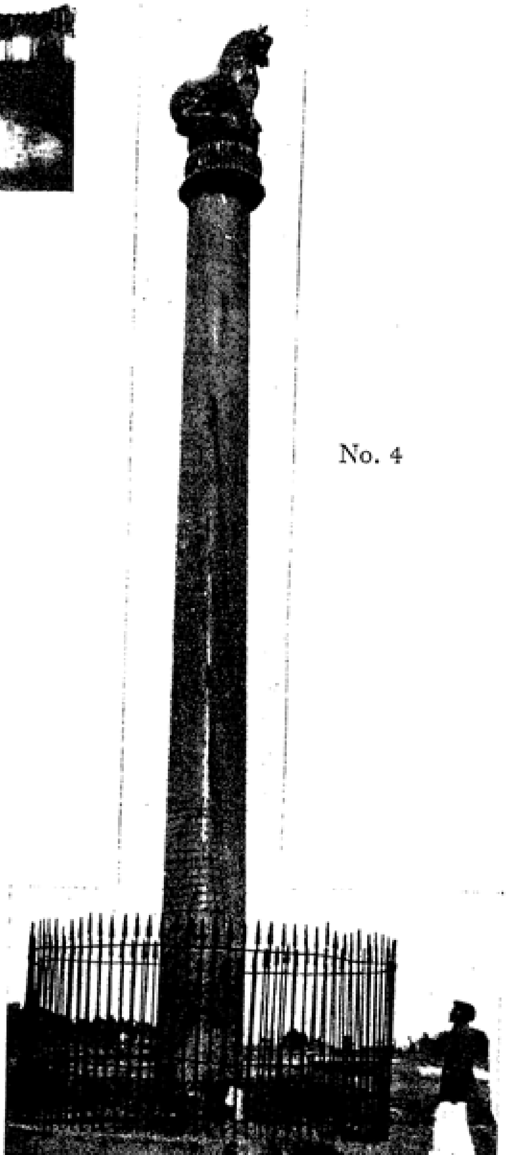
No. 1



Left—No. 3

No. 2





No. 4

are indications that the 'originals' sent out by Aśoka were not always accurately understood by regional translators, which led occasionally to variations in the local renderings. The "fault of the *lipikara*" mentioned in RE 14 may have reference not only to the engravers but to the translators as well. The different regional versions are replete with variants. Most of these variants relate to spelling, or grammar and morphology, of which no notice has been taken in the following pages unless some special philological interest is involved. All variants of important significance other than grammatical have been noted. Variants that recur often, have been noted in the places of their first occurrence only.

The word *lipi*, 'what has been written, an inscription, a rescript', has been used six times in the Brāhmī REs. Indian grammarians derive this word from $\sqrt{}$*lip*, 'to smear', perhaps suggested by the usual mode of writing viz. spreading black pigment mixed with water over palm or birch leaf after it had been written upon by means of a pointed rod of steel which cut into the leaf. But the Kharoṣṭhī versions use instead of *lipi*, the word *dipi* which occurs also in the Achaemenian inscriptions. Again, the participles *likhita, lekhita, likhāpita* appear at Shāhbāzgarhī as *nipista, nipesita, nipesapita* and these latter are derived from the Old Persian *nipis*, 'to write', which too occurs in the Achaemenian inscriptions. These would show Persian influence on the language of North-West India.

Aśoka's inscriptions reveal several other features that may perhaps be attributed to Persian influence. It is somewhat surprising that although writing was known in the Indus Valley civilisation, no written material belonging to the long period that intervened between that civilisation and Aśoka has been recovered so far. The written material obtained from the Indus Valley again, consists only of small 'seals', probably used in commercial transactions ; no large composition of a literary, monumental or public character has yet been found in writing on stone, metal or terracotta in the wide region now known to have been covered by the Indus Valley civilisation. We know further from MRE, RE 6 and PE 7 that in addition to his inscriptions, Aśoka was in the habit of issuing oral proclamations on Dharma, which were announced with the accompaniment of beat of drums etc as is common in India today. It is very probable that his earliest Dharma pronouncements were oral proclamations like MRE and not stone inscriptions, and for the latter he had no example in India to follow

whereas a number of such stone records had been set up between the 6th and the 4th centuries B.C. by Darius and his successors in Persia, who had far more ancient examples of this kind of records in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to inspire them. It is likely therefore, that in starting the innovation of inscriptions on stone, Aśoka was influenced by the example of West Asia, most particularly of Persia, with which the contacts of Magadha had been intensified since the days of Candragupta Maurya.

The familiar preamble of many of the Aśokan records : "The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin spoke thus", may possibly have been adopted from the Achaemenian formula : "Says Darius (Xerxes, Artaxerxes), the King." Scholars have traced other features too in Aśoka's inscriptions to Achaemenian influence. It is to be noticed however, that while Aśoka was aware that the Achaemenian inscriptions had been meant for glorifying the kings' territorial conquests and for purposes of their self-aggrandizement etc, he adopted the same mode of making public pronouncements for the purpose of Dharma conquest and for publicising his Dharma activities.

6. Names of Aśoka

The full name and title of Aśoka found in his inscriptions is 'The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin', sometimes shortened into 'The Beloved of the gods' or into 'King Priyadarśin'. The Gujarra version of MRE mentions him as 'The Beloved of the gods, Priyadarśin, King Aśoka', while the Maskī version of the same calls him 'The Beloved of the gods, Aśoka'. In BBTE he is styled as 'the Magadhan'. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (12th cent.) gives 'Śāntāvasāda,' 'one whose lethargy has been controlled' as one of his names, probably due to his untiring exertions in the service of Dharma and public welfare. Buddhists have also called him 'Dharmarāja', 'the King of Dharma'.

Devānāṃpriya, 'Beloved of the gods', is not a personal name but a royal title equivalent to 'His Majesty'. In some of the Inscriptions, *rājā* has been used as a variant of this term. It is not known if Aśoka first used the title *Devānāṃpriya* or if it was already in use before him. The same title is prefixed to the name of Aśoka's grandson Daśaratha too in his inscriptions in the Nāgārjunī hill cave near Gaya, as also to the name of the Ceylonese king Tissa, a contemporary of Aśoka, in the *Dīpavaṃsa,* a work probably not older than the 5th century A.D. The manners of the aristocracy are affected in course of

time by the bourgeoisie and we find in the Jaina Ardha-Māgadhī canonical texts that 'beloved of the gods' is used as a common mode of address by people of all classes. It is interesting to note that while Darius was styled in his inscriptions by many a high-sounding title, Aśoka contented himself with this modest title only as the sole mark of his royalty. It is also worthy of notice that Aśoka calls himself only *rājā* and not *mahārājā* or any of its other amplifications.

The grammarian Patañjali (c. 150 B.C.) says that the term *devānāṃpriya*, in the form of a compound, is used as an honorific, in which sense it is used twice by the poet Bāṇa of the 7th century A.D. in the *Harṣacarita*, but Patañjali (on Pāṇini II. 4.56) seems to be aware of the ironical sense too in which this term was used. Kātyāyana who lived in Aśoka's times (c. 250-200 B.C.), points out in commenting on a rule of Pāṇini that the term was used in an abusive sense. Kaiyaṭa (c. 12th cent. A.D.), a commentator on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, was aware of this secondary sense of the term while Hemacandra's lexicon (12th century A.D.) and the *Siddhāntakaumudī* (c. 17th century A.D.) explicitly say that *devānāṃpriya* means 'a fool'.

It is no wonder that a term of respect would come to be used ironically in disparagement as well. But apart from this, there might have been other special reasons why *devānāṃpriya* came to acquire the meaning of 'a fool'. For many of his activities, one can imagine, Aśoka certainly became unpopular with many sections of his subjects. The prohibition of animal sacrifice (RE 1) was a serious blow to the powerful forces of Vedic Brahmanism and the order against *samāja* festive gatherings (ib.) must have given rise to widespread dissatisfaction. Abjuration of warfare (RE 13 ; SKRE 2) must have been resented by ambitious military classes and politicians. Aśoka's special devotion and large charities to the Buddhists who were till then a comparatively little known sect, must have caused considerable jealousy among other sects, specially the Brahmans. The appointment of ministers and other officials for the propagation of Dharma (REs 3, 5), Aśoka's Dharma tours, public instructions, questions and answers on Dharma etc (RE 8) must have caused merriment to many. His excessive zeal in the discharge of his public duties (RE 6) and his vigilant supervision of the public administration (SKRE 1 ; PEs 1, 4) probably irritated the officialdom. His frequent Dharma proclamations

(orally, *e.g.* MRE) perhaps amused the man in the street. His serious earnestness and lofty moral ideal must have caused embarrassment and dismay to many. It can be surmised therefore, that many popular jokes circulated about him and many nicknames were given to him. It can also be imagined that in the opinion of many of his contemporaries, Aśoka was a mad man.

And there was yet more. Aśoka started doing many other things which, however laudable, had not been seen in India before viz. sending physicians, medicines and Dharma missionaries to foreign countries ; building large stūpas and monasteries for the little known Buddhists ; hewing cave-dwellings out of rocks for the use of the naked Ājīvikas whom probably few liked ; erecting great stone pillars surmounted by magnificent figures of animals, fashioned possibly by bands of foreign craftsmen, etc. But what probably appeared to many as the strangest of Aśoka's doings was that all over the land, long writings inscribed on rocks and pillars began to appear on his orders, which purported to teach and enforce the practice of moral virtues. The oral proclamations and stone-writings, people found, also recounted with evident satisfaction and pride the strange doings of their author, for which he had the further foolhardiness (as it probably appeared to many) of claiming not merely Indiawide but worldwide success. Aśoka's munificent charities to the poor and to religious sects, and such expensive undertakings as the medical missions etc, also probably caused a serious drain on the treasury, which his subordinates viewed with anxiety as affecting their own financial security. That is how probably many minds worked, and when they found all these stone-inscribed sermons commencing with and frequently repeating the title of their author, *devānāṃpriya*, it perhaps needed but little effort on their part to project into the term a meaning pleasing to themselves.

It is to be noted that the title *Devānāṃpriya* has been omitted in the BCIs and in BBTE, probably because they were addressed to members of religious Orders, consistent with the custom of Indian kings of discarding the insignia of royalty when approaching holy personages. In SPE, although it related to church matters, the title was not omitted because the document was in fact a command addressed not to the church but to state officials.

Of the two names Aśoka (Aśokavardhana in full in the Purāṇas) and Priyadarśin, the former was probably a personal name, in line

with the name Vītaśoka (or Vigataśoka) given to a brother of Aśoka in Buddhist tradition, unless of course the brother or his name was fictitious. The paucity of use of the name Aśoka compared with the great frequency of Priyadarśin indicates perhaps that the latter was the formal (coronation ?) name, as Amitra-ghāta (or °khāda, 'slayer or devourer of enemies') was probably of Bindusāra as Strabo and Athenaeus call him. Priyadarśin means 'one who is of pleasant looks' or as some say, 'one who looks pleasantly (on others)'. Aśoka's name appears in the Ceylonese *Dīpavaṃa* both as Piyadassi and Piyadassana, the latter apparently being nothing but a synonym of the former. The drama *Mudrārākṣasa* prefixes 'Piadaṃsana' to the name of Aśoka's grandfather Candragupta. The interval between Candragupta Maurya and the *Mudrārākṣasa* having been nearly a millennium, it is not unlikely that Aśoka's name was confused in public memory with that of his grandfather who was so well-known to the general public through legends and tales about his extirpation of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha. But if 'Priyadarśin' did really have any association with Candragupta as well, it may probably be surmised that it was some kind of a hereditary name, that is to say Candragupta was Priyadarśin I and Aśoka was Priyadarśin II, it being common for Indian kings to adopt their grandfather's name.

The name 'Magadhan' was probably in imitation of the Pali scriptures which refer to the two Magadhan royal contemporaries of Buddha as *Rājā Māgadho Seniyo Bimbisāro* and *Rājā Māgadho Ajātasattu*. It is significant perhaps that this appellation of Aśoka is used only in an edict which was addressed to the Buddhist church. A Bharhut inscription too has *Rājā Pasenaji* (Prasenajit) *Kosalo*.

Public celebrations, festivities, release of prisoners etc were customary on the anniversary of a king's birth or coronation, conquest of new territory etc. From the manner of the mention of the two stars Tiṣya (now more commonly called Puṣyā) and Punarvasu in the SKREs and PE 5, there is no doubt that these two stars were sacred to Aśoka. Kauṭilya forbids the branding, castration etc of animals on the king's birthday, anniversary of conquest of new territory etc. As PE 5 forbids these actions on the days of Tiṣya and Punarvasu, it has been surmised that one of these was Aśoka's birth star and the other his coronation star, as the question of his celebrating anniversaries of conquests does not arise at all, for he had

forsworn all conquest for ever. Again, from the mention of Tiṣya only and not of Punarvasu as well, in the SKREs as the occasion for the public hearing of those two edicts, it has been surmised that the omission of Punarvasu was due to its being Aśoka's coronation star, an occasion of which he did not desire to remind the Kaliṅgas who had undergone such terrible sufferings due to his kingship having been forced on them, just as RE 13 was not engraved in the Kaliṅga series, probably because it referred to the fierce Kaliṅga war. If the supposition that Punarvasu was Aśoka's coronation star be correct, it may perhaps be inferred that Tiṣya was his birth star.

7. Aśoka's Family and Relatives

Mention is found in the Inscriptions, of these members of Aśoka's family and of his relatives :

Āryaputra—MRE, Mysore versions—A prince, probably a brother, cousin or uncle of the reigning monarch.

Bhaginīs and Bhrātṛs—RE 5—Sisters and brothers. The matter of Aśoka's brothers has led to some interesting questions relating to the four years' delay that is said to have taken place in his formal coronation, and relating to his fratricidal wars as alleged in Buddhist legend. It is to be noted that in his inscriptions, Aśoka refers not explicitly to his brothers but only to their female apartments. Some have inferred that the mention of his brothers' families presupposes that the brothers were alive at the time or in other words, the legends regarding the slaughter of his brothers by Aśoka are fictions created by the Buddhists to glorify Aśoka's subsequent religious-mindedness. Others have argued that the existence of the brothers' families does not necessarily mean that the brothers too were alive. Mahāyānic legends mention two brothers of Aśoka, Susīma and Vītaśoka (or Vigataśoka) by name. It is narrated that during the reign of Bindusāra, a rebellion broke out in Takṣaśilā where Susīma was the viceroy, and Bindusāra sent Aśoka to quell the rebellion, but before Aśoka entered Takṣaśilā, the citizens met him at the city-gate and told him "We are neither against the Prince (-viceroy) nor against King Bindusāra, but the wicked ministers insult us".

Ceylonese tradition names another brother of Aśoka, Tiṣya by name, whom Aśoka is said to have chosen as heir-apparent. If there be any truth in it, it would show that Aśoka held a poor opinion of his sons.

If the four years' interval between Aśoka's accession and formal coronation be a fact, the delay might have probably been due to his being engaged in quelling revolts in some of the Provinces on the death of Bindusāra. Some of his ambitious brothers might have been the leaders of some of these revolts, with a view to carve out independent kingdoms for themselves. The quelling of these rebellions, in which some of these brothers might have lost their lives, might have given rise to the legends about Aśoka's slaughter of his brothers. A strong argument however, against Aśoka having been a deliberate fratricide is that it has no echoes in his inscriptions. Aśoka who was so truthful and frank about his remorse after the Kaliṅga war (RE 13), about the continuation of the slaughter of some animals for the royal kitchen even after he had adopted the doctrine of *ahiṃsā* (RE 1), and about his comparative lack of Dharma-exertion for more than a year after his conversion to Buddhism (MRE) etc, would not perhaps have been totally silent about his fratricidal past if it had really been a fact.

A legend is told by the Buddhists to explain Aśoka's charities to the sect of the Ājīvikas whom the Buddhists did not like, which may have a bearing on the question of Aśoka's accession. The legend is to the effect that during the life-time of Bindusāra, an Ājīvika ascetic predicted that Aśoka would be king and would attain great fame, which greatly pleased Aśoka's mother (and Aśoka too presumably) and hence the charities to the Ājīvikas in grateful regard when Aśoka actually became king. A Mahāyānic legend says that Aśoka's mother, Subhadrāṅgī by name, came from Campā (present Bhagalpur region) and was Brahman by birth. For a king of non-Brahman extraction to marry a Brahman wife was nothing impossible, but yet Aśoka's mother's caste might have been overstated in order to give him the dignity of having been Brahman-born, just as the Jainas say that Mahāvīra was born at first in the womb of a Brahman woman but the foetus was transferred by the gods subsequently to the womb of a Kṣatriya woman, his real mother. The Ājīvikas were given no doubt to the practice of prognostications, forbidden for Buddhist and Jaina ascetics alike, and the story might have been invented with the motive of showing that the Ājīvikas were patronised by Aśoka not for their moral worth but for other reasons, or with the motive of lowering the Ājīvikas in the estimation of the pious as practisers of a forbidden art But if the story had any element of truth, it may be taken as meaning.

that Aśoka and his mother were so pleased with the prediction because in his early life Aśoka was not expected to succeed to the throne, or in other words, he was not the heir-apparent i.e. he had at least one elder brother. This elder brother's premature death without leaving a son might have called Aśoka to the throne. That would account perhaps for the four years that are said to have intervened between Bindusāra's death and Aśoka's coronation and it may also throw some light on how Aśoka's ascending the throne owing to the *death of a brother* led to the legend of *fratricide*. Again, Buddhist tradition records that Aśoka was nominated as heir-apparent by Bindusāra because of his many sons Aśoka had the most eminent warlike qualities, which too suggests that Aśoka was not the heir-apparent by right of primogeniture. In that case, the delay in Aśoka's coronation might have been caused by some conflict between him, his father's nominee, and an elder brother (the incompetent Susīma of Takṣaśilā ?), from which Aśoka emerged successful, may be after a war in or after which his elder brother was killed or put to death or blinded etc. If Aśoka had really been nominated by his father to succeed him, there was perhaps nothing wrong according to the notions of that age, in his dealing with his elder brother in the aforementioned manner, were the succession challenged by the brother in an active manner.

Dārakas—PE 7—Sons of the king, not necessarily by concubines but probably by queens other than the chief queen. A gradation existed among a king's numerous consorts. Or, minor sons ?

Devīs—APQGE ; PE 7—Queens. Aśoka had several queens as his reference to them (PE 7) and to his female apartments (RE 5) in the plural number shows. Only one of them is mentioned by name as "the second queen, the mother of Tīvara, Kāruvākī" (APQGE). The Ceylonese *Mahāvaṃsa* records that one of Aśoka's queens was named Devī (this probably was not a personal name but the designation by which she was commonly known), the beautiful daughter of a merchant of the great city of Vidiśā, with whom Aśoka fell in love when on his way from Pāṭaliputra to Ujjayinī as his father's viceroy. It is said that Aśoka had two sons by her, Ujjeniya and Mahendra, and a daughter, Saṅghamitrā, and that this queen lived in Vidiśā and not in Pāṭaliputra. Mahendra and Saṅghamitrā went to Ceylon as monk and nun. Another version recorded by Hiuen Tsang however, calls them brother and sister of Aśoka. Saṅghamitrā's young son, Sumana by name, is also said to have accompanied Mahendra to

Ceylon as a monk and her husband's name is given as Agnibrahmā, a nephew of Aśoka. Legends name several other queens of Aśoka, of whom Tiṣyarakṣitā is said to have fallen in love with Kuṇāla, a son of Aśoka by another queen. But Tiṣyrakṣitā might be not a personal name but only the feminine form of Aśoka's 'star name', for if his birth-star was Tiṣya, his 'star name' would be something like Tiṣyarakṣita, Tiṣyagupta etc.

Devīkumāras—PE 7—Sons of princesses, sons of the reigning monarch's aunts, sisters etc.

Jñātis—RE 5 ; PE 6—Relatives.

Kumāras—SKREs—Sons by the chief queen, who served as viceroys in different imperial Provinces.

Pautras, Prapautras and Putras—REs 4-6, 13 ; SPE, Sānchī ; PE 7—Grandsons, great-grandsons and sons. From his reference to his sons in the plural number in RE 4, it would appear that already in the 12th regnal year, Aśoka had several sons and perhaps grandsons as well.

8. The Kaliṅga War (RE 13)

The Kaliṅga war, the last war of his life that Aśoka engaged in, was the turning point of his life. It is not known if he had waged other wars before this as king. He had seen no doubt, a lot of warfare during the reign of his father who, it is said, quelled many rebellions and led many military compaigns, also to the south.

The cause of the Kaliṅga war is not known. If the Kaliṅgas, situated so close to Magadha, had been able upto the time of Aśoka to withstand Mauryan imperialism, it reflected credit on their solidarity and courage. But if they had already been conquered either by Candragupta or by Bindusāra, the need for their reconquest by Aśoka must have arisen because of their having in the meantime freed themselves from the Mauryan yoke. In any case, the resistance offered by them to the Magadhan power of the day is an undying memorial to their great courage.

The war was a very sanguinary one. 'One hundred and fifty thousand' were carried away as prisoners ; 'one hundred thousand' (belonging to Kaliṅga alone ?) were slain ; and 'nearly as many' (i.e. one hundred thousand at least, of non-combatants) died. We do not know if these numbers are to be taken figuratively or literally, but if they were anywhere near the actual figures, the number of the slain,

the dead and the imprisoned would appear to be very much in excess of what would happen in normal warfare to the army of a country of Kaliṅga's dimensions and population. It is apparent too from Aśoka's words that in consequence of this war, great suffering and considerable loss of life were caused to the general civil population of Kaliṅga, religious bodies not excluded.

We are prone to imagine that in ancient India, the code of conduct followed in warfare was one by which the strife was confined strictly to the combatants, leaving the civil population, agriculturists, crops, tradesmen etc, not to speak of religious bodies, completely unharmed, for such is enjoined by the law-givers. But the picture presented by Aśoka's Kaliṅga war is very different ; we do not know if most Indian wars of those days, like all wars in all ages and countries, were like that in actual practice—as distinct from the ethical codes laid down by law-givers—but probably they were not very different. The usual practice perhaps was that whoever opposed or resisted or was in any manner hostile to a conqueror, had to pay as much penalty for it as was required by the aggressor in accomplishing his object.

Aśoka was no doubt a strong man as many of his actions when he became 'Dharmāśoka' clearly show. He was not at all unfamiliar with battles, bloodshed, deportation of captives, and the other kinds of havoc and devastation caused by war. A strong man in civil and ecclesiastical administration as we find him to be in the Inscriptions, he was probably a stronger and harder military leader —as we may infer from his having been sent by Bindusāra to suppress the rebellion in Takṣaśilā and from his nomination by his father as the heir-apparent owing to his martial qualities. Why then was he so very much moved by the happenings of the Kaliṅga war ?—one may ask. The reason probably was that the devastation caused in Kaliṅga was far greater than was usual in wars. It was almost a 'total' war in which, on the side of the defenders, not only the military but a large proportion of the general population as well took part. Whether it was so or not, the reprisals by the aggressor certainly seem to have been extraordinarily severe as otherwise the enormity of the effects mentioned by Aśoka cannot be accounted for. These enormities were inflicted not only on the combatants but on the entire population, either because the Kaliṅgas had almost to a man put up a very stubborn resistance or in order to teach them as well as others through them, a very salutory

lesson viz. the consequences of daring to stand up against Magadha. That such drastic action would be taken by the army without the knowledge or consent of the sovereign is not very likely. That 'Caṇḍāśoka' would not shrink from sanctioning these measures it imaginable—he was probably present in person in Kaliṅga to direct the war. It was again the severity of the measures adopted in Kaliṅga that perhaps made other borderers stand in mortal fear of an attack by Aśoka as suggested by SKRE 2. The instruction Aśoka desired his successors to follow viz. that if they at all resorted to conquest by arms, they should practise mercy and light punishments, might also have been prompted by the actual happenings of the Kaliṅga war.

It is to be noted that Aśoka does not blame the Kaliṅga war in particular or his generals for any of their actions, for all that happened in Kaliṅga was perhaps usual in all such wars and was not considered improper by the military code of the time. That is why Aśoka condemns all wars of conquest.

9. Chronology of the Inscriptions

Many of the Inscriptions mention the regnal years in which they were issued. Some REs that do not do so, are to be supposed to have been issued in the same year as the preceding dated one. Aśoka reckoned regnal years in current years i.e. when he says that the Kaliṅga war took place when he was crowned eight years, it meant that the event took place not when eight regnal years had been completed and the ninth was running, but when seven years had been completed and the eighth was running. This is inferred from the statement made at the end of PE 5 that till the time he was crowned twenty-six years, he had released prisoners (probably an annual event on the anniversary of his birth) twenty-five times.

The usual preamble 'The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin spoke thus' or its variant 'This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin' etc is omitted at the commencement of some of the REs. This omission probably means that those REs in which the preamble is wanting were issued together with the last preceding RE containing the preamble i. e. REs 1 and 2 were issued together ; REs 3 and 4 together ; RE 5 alone ; REs 6, 7 and 8 together ; REs 9 and 10 together ; REs 11, 12 and 13 together ; and RE 14 alone.

Regarding the probable chronology of the undated Inscription, the following observations may be made.

MRE-It is probably the earliest of Aśoka's pronouncements that have come down to us, for as its opening words show, it was indited (as an oral proclamation, *śrāvaṇa*) when he had been religious-minded for more than 2½ years and a full Buddhist for over a year. Counting from the Kaliṅga war in the 8th regnal year, shortly after which he became religious-minded (RE 13), 2½ years would bring us to the 11th or 12th regnal year, and somewhat more than a year added to his visit to Bodhgayā in the 10th regnal year (RE 8) when he must have been a full Buddhist, also brings us to the 11th or 12th regnal year which may therefore be regarded as the date of inditement of MRE. PE 6 tells us that Aśoka commenced to engrave on stone the Dharma-*lipis* in the 12th regnal year. Perhaps MRE was *engraved* simultaneously with or shortly after the RE series. From the manner in which MRE is engraved at Yerrāguḍi—the only spot where it is found together with i.e. at close proximity to, although fully detached from the REs —some think that it was engraved before, while others think after the REs. In the 'postscripts' appended to MRE at some places regarding the methods to be followed for publicising it, the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām versions state that it was to be engraved on pillars where pillars existed, which has given rise to some problems. We do not know when exactly Aśoka started erecting his pillars although it is pretty certain that the inscriptions on his pillars were incised not simultaneously with but some time after the setting up of the pillars. Some have inferred that many pillars—not set up by Aśoka but of an earlier date, Mauryan or pre-Mauryan—already existed when the Rūpnāth and Sahasrām postscripts were written. In PE 7 Aśoka twice mentions the oral proclamations before the written inscriptions, which shows perhaps that the former were begun somewhat earlier than the latter. A little later in the same Inscription however, he mentions three events in this order viz. (i) setting up of the pillars, (ii) appointment of Dharma-Mahāmātras, and (iii) Dharma proclamations. If the relative sequence of these events has been mentioned by him in the reverse order,—for the last was possibly the first to be started,—the setting up of the pillars began after or in the same year as the first appointment of Dharma-Mahāmātras in the 13th regnal year (RE5). In any case it would appear that MRE was engraved some time after its first issu as an oral proclamation.

SKREs 1-2—From the manner in which SKRE 2 is engraved at Dhaulī, there is no doubt that it was engraved after RE 14, and from Jaugaḍa it is clear that what we now call SKRE 2 was engraved before what we now call SKRE 1. The relative sequence of these two inscriptions was misunderstood by Prinsep in the Dhaulī version where SKRE 2 is inscribed in the left-hand column, REs 1-6 in the middle column, and SKRE 1 at the bottom of the right-hand column, below REs 7-10 and 14. The mistake has however been allowed to continue in order to prevent confusion in the earlier (wrong) and the later (correct) numbering of these two inscriptions. We have to remember however, that what we now call SKRE 2 was issued before what we now call SKRE 1. It is probable that both of them were issued in the same (i.e. 13th regnal) year as REs 5-14.

SPE—As this edict is directed to the prevention of schismatic activities within the Buddhist church and as it orders strong action against those who participated in such activities, it is probable that is was issued after the Third Buddhist Council held by Aśoka in Pāṭaliputra as reported in Ceylonese tradition. As Northern tradition knows nothing of this Council, it was probably not a general Council of all sections of the Buddhist church but was a congress of a more limited character, convoked not for the purpose of revising or reciting the scriptures but only for ending schisms. The exact date of this so-called Third Council is disputed—it is variously put at different dates between the 17th and the 29th regnal years. We shall regard tentatively the mean between these two extremes viz. the 22nd or 23rd regnal year as the probable date of this Council and also of SPE.

Some have surmised that as on the Allahabad Pillar—the only place where SPE is found in company with the PEs—SPE is engraved separate from but below PEs 1-6, SPE was probably engraved after PE 6. That may not however be the correct inference. It may be that SPE was the first to be engraved on that pillar, below which and a little to the right was subsequently added APQGE, and thereafter when PE 1 had to be engraved, it was started very much higher above SPE. Another fact supports the later date of PE 1 in relation to SPE. On all the other pillars, the PEs are engraved in two parallel columns facing different directions. But on the Delhi-Toprā Pillar—the only place where PE 7 was engraved—

PE 7 began after PE 6 in the same column but when the end of the column was reached, the engraving was continued all around the pillar because of the great length of PE 7, which shows that engraving around the pillar was adopted instead of columnwise writing when economy of space was necessary. Therefore it may be surmised that writing the PEs all around the pillar was adopted on the Allahabad pillar from the very outset because of the presence there already of SPE and APQGE.

BBTE—As Aśoka was prompted to address this edict to the Buddhist Order by the desire that "the Saṃgha may endure long," it may perhaps be connected with the Third Council. Just as SPE was addressed to state officials for safeguarding the Saṃgha from schisms, this edict was addressed to the church itself, perhaps for promoting among its members those virtues and that frame of mind as would best prevent schismatic proclivities. So we may perhaps assign this edict too tentatively to the 22nd or 23rd regnal year.

APQGE—As mentioned above, this edict was engraved probably after SPE and we may tentatively regard the 24th regnal year as its date.

Except the SKREs, SPE, BBTE and APQGE, all the other Inscriptions are dated explicitly or are datable inferentially. Aśoka's pronouncements may therefore be chronologically tabulated, course of conjecturally in some cases, as below :

Regnal year—	
(?) 11th-12th	MRE (as oral proclamation).
12th	BCIs 1-2 ; REs 1-4.
13th	REs 5-14 ; SKREs 1-2.
19th	BCI 3.
20th	LPI ; NPI.
(?) 22nd-24th	SPE ; BBTE ; APQGE.
26th	PEs 1-6.
27th	PE 7.

The above sequence has been followed in the treatment of the various Inscriptions in the subsequent chapters, with the exception of BCI 3 which has been appended to BCIs 1-2 for the sake of homogeneity.

10. Chronology of Events

Incidents in Aśoka's life and his activities, as mentioned in the Inscriptions, may thus be shown chronologically :

Regnal year—

8th—Kaliṅga War ; consequent remorse and craving for Dharma (RE 13).

9th—Dharma activities not so energetic (MRE).

10th—Became a Buddhist ; visit to Bodhgayā and abolition of the royal hunt ; commencement of Dharma-tours (RE 8).

11th-12th—Commenced making oral proclamations on Dharma ; efforts for establishing harmony among different religious sects (MRE) Gifts of cave-dwelling to the Ājīvikas (BCIs 1-2). Prohibition of sacrificial slaughter of animals ; prohibition of *samāja* festive gatherings ; reduction leading to total stoppage of animal slaughter for the royal kitchen (RE 1). Opening of hospitals and supply of medicaments in India and abroad ; digging of wells and planting of trees along the highways (RE 2). Institution of quinquennial tours of state officials for the propagation of Dharma (RE 3). Commencement of the issue of Dharma rescripts (PE 6).

13th—Appointment of Dharma-Mahāmātras (RE 5). Instruction to state officials to check disharmony among religious communities (RE 12). Assurance to his borderers of his goodwill towards them (SKRE 2). Exhortation of judicial officers to be conscientious, just and energetic in the administration of the law ; sending out of ministers every 5 years from the imperial capital and every 3 years from the Provincial capitals for superintending judicial administration (SKRE 1).

14th—Enlargement of the stūpa of Kanakamuni (NPI).

19th—Gift of a cave-dwelling to the Ājīvikas (probably by some-one other than Aśoka, BCI 3).

20th—Visit to the birthplace of Buddha in Lumbinī ; erection of a pillar and construction of a railing on the spot ; remission of taxes and land revenue for Lumbinī village (LPI). Visit to and erection of a pillar at the stūpa of Kanakamuni (NPI).

(?) *22nd-24th*—Expulsion of schismatic Buddhist monks and nuns from monastic life (SPE). Recommends the study by all Buddhists of some special Buddhist scriptural texts (BBTE). Announcement of the charities of the second queen Kāruvākī (APQGE).

26th—Exhorts District Officers on public welfare and impartial administration of justice ; grant of three days' respite to criminals sentenced to death (PE 4). Announces special orders for preventing cruelty to animal life (PE 5).

27th—Refers to the appointment of Mahāmātras for organising

charities and for superintending the affairs of various religious communities.

11. Five Western Kings

RE 13 mentions by name five foreign kings of the western world, who were no doubt all alive when it was written (13th regnal year), to whom Aśoka sent envoys. One of them again, Antiochos (the Second, Theos), is mentioned by name and the other four by implication in RE 2 as well. Some think that Aśoka's close contacts with these kings of the Hellenic world, particularly with Antiochos II, was probably due to Aśoka's grandmother or mother having been the daughter of Seleukos, whom Candragupta or Bindusāra is said to have married.

Aśoka mentions these five western kings in this order (see Map 2) viz. first he names the king immediately on his western frontier (No. 1); then he names the two who were on the south (No. 2) and the north (No. 3) respectively of No. 1; then he names the one (No. 4) on the west of No. 2; and lastly the one (No. 5) on the west of No. 3. The dominions of these five kings are shown in Map 2 by these respective serial numbers in the order of Aśoka's mentioning them. They were all the successors of the generals of Alexander, who divided among themselves the territories conquered by Alexander. They have been identified as the following, viz.—

No. 1—Antiochos II Theos (261-246 B. C.) of Syria, son of Antiochos I Soter and grandson of Seleukos Nikator whom Candragupta defeated. Seleukos sent Megasthenes as his envoy to Candragupta's court and Strabo adds that Antiochos I sent Deimachos as his envoy to Bindusāras' court. Bindusāra was on very intimate terms with Antiochos I. Antiochos II too must have sent an envoy to Aśoka's court and so did probably the other four Hellenic kings as well.

No. 2—Ptolemy II Philadelphos (285-247 B.C.) of Egypt. Pliny says that this monarch sent an envoy named Dionysius to an unnamed Indian king who might have been either Bindusāra or Aśoka.

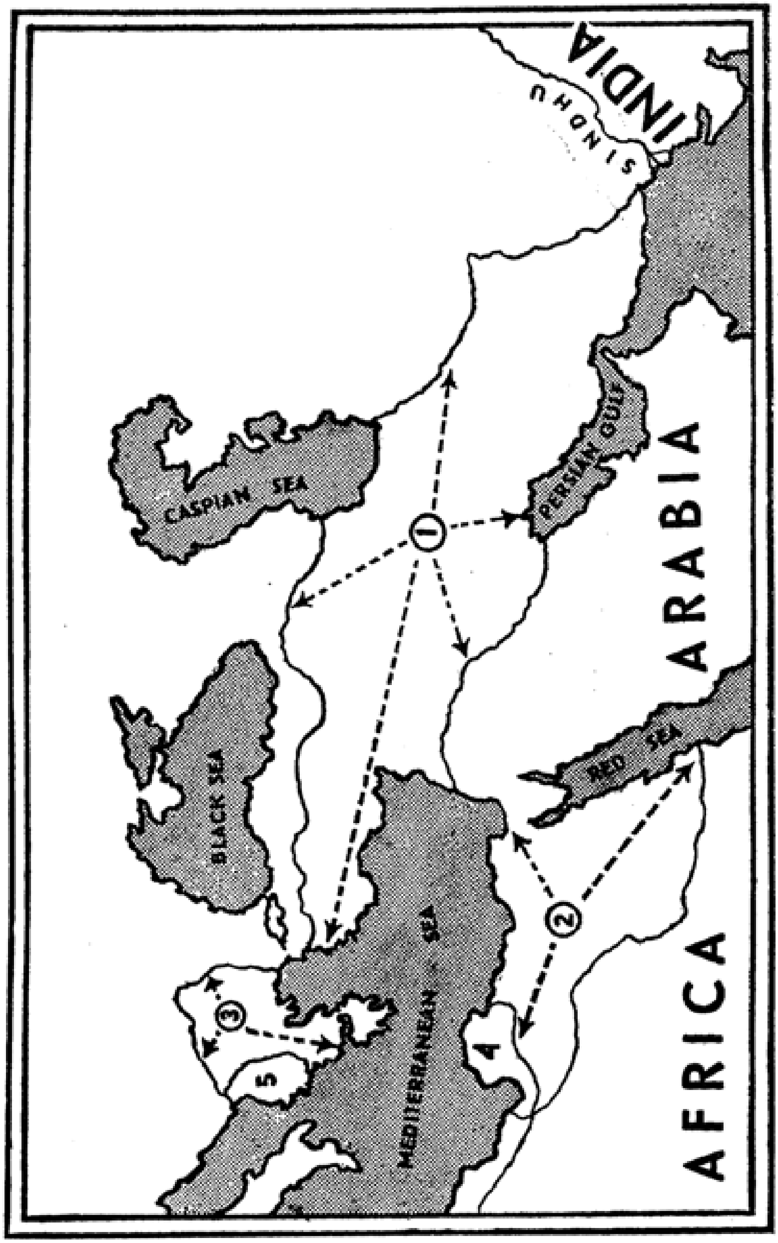
No. 3—Antigonas Gonatas of Macedonia (278-230 B.C.).

No. 4—Magas of Cyrene (300-250 B.C.), a half-brother of Ptolemy II (No. 2 above).

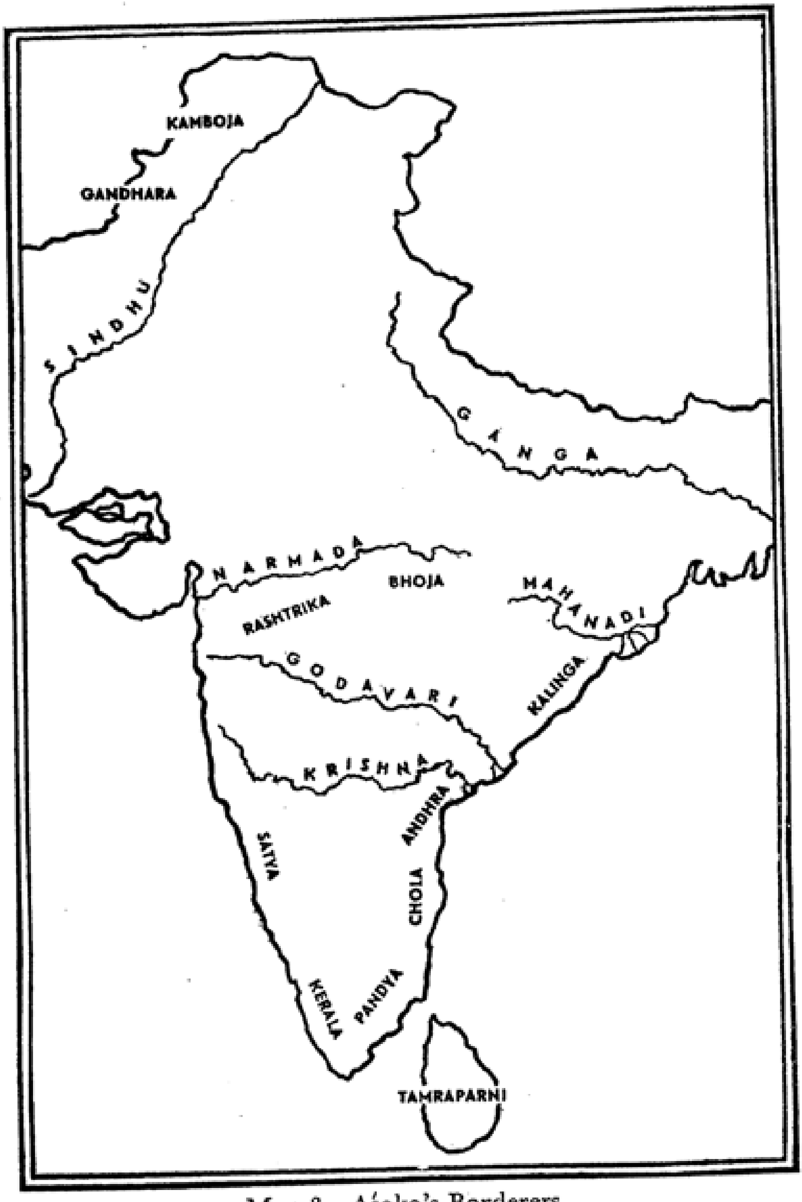
No. 5—Alexander of Epirus (272-255 B.C.).

12. Peoples and Countries

The peoples and countries mentioned in REs 2, 5 and 13 as bordering on Aśoka's dominions, may be located thus (see Map 3) :



Map 2—Dominions of the five Western kings named by Aśoka.



Map 3—Aśoka's Borderers.

Andhras—South of the Kalingas and of the river Godāvarī.

Bhojas—Possibly corresponding roughly to modern Berar.

Colas—Roughly corresponding to the present Tiruchirapalli-Tanjore-Madurai region.

Gandhāras—North-West Punjab ; the name probably survives in that of modern Kandahar.

Kalingas—Between the rivers Mahānadī and Godāvarī.

Kambojas—North Punjab.

Keralaputras—Roughly corresponding to modern Travancore. *Putras* = descendants, tribe, race.

Nābhaka-Nābhapaṃktis—Not identifiable, although from their mention between the Kambojas and the Bhojas, the south Punjab region may be surmised ; does the name survive in that of present Nabha ?

Pāṇḍyas—Roughly corresponding to the present Tinnevelly District.

Pāriṃdas (or *Pāladas*)—Not identifiable, although their mention together with the Andhras indicates location in South India. Identification with the Pulindas is tempting, specially because the Andhras and the Pulindas are mentioned together in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, although it is difficult to connect Pul° with Pār° (or Pāl°) phonetically.

Pitinikas (or *Pete°*)—Not indentifiable although their combination once with the Rāṣṭrikas and once with the Bhojas may probably indicate location in north-western Deccan.

Rāṣṭrikas—Probably to be identified with the Mahārāṣṭra country (Mahāraṭṭha in Pali). The Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the 8th century A.D. may have been connected with this name.

Satiyaputras (or *Sā°*)—Probably located in west Deccan, cf. the surname Sātpute current among the present Mārāṭhās ; perhaps the same people who are called in later Tamil literature as (S)atiya-Mān < earlier *(S)atiya-Makan, in which Makan and its contraction Mān both mean *putra*, 'son, descendant'.

Tāmraparṇīs—Ceylon.

Yonas—The Greeks or the Hellenic kingdoms, particularly the territories ruled over by Antiochos II of Syria ; derived possibly from Iavones (the oldest name of the Ionian Greeks) > Iaones > Iones > Eng. Ionian. The Sansk. name *Yavana* reached India possibly through some Semitic language which, like Hebrew, wrote it as Yavan or Yawan, known to Old Persian in a contracted from as Yaunā. Yona may be < Yavana of earlier Sanskrit or < Yaunā of Old Persian, modified by the Arabs into Yūn which gave rise in India to Yūnānī = the Greeks.

13. Names of Places

The following places are mentioned in the Inscriptions :

Isila—MRE, Mysore versions—A divisional headquarters of the southern Province of Aśoka's empire = present Śiddāpura, according to some.

Kauśāmbī—SPE, Allahabad—Present Kosam, about 30 miles south-west of Allahabad, on the north bank of the river Yamunā. An important place and a divisional, if not Provincial, headquarters of Aśoka's empire ; visited many times by Buddha.

Lumbinī—LPI—Birth-place of Buddha, now in the Basti Dist. of Nepal Terai.

Pāṭaliputra—RE 5 ; probably also SPE, Sārnāth—Capital of Magadha and of the Maurya empire ; in RE 5 while the Girnār version has Pāṭaliputra, all the other versions have instead 'here' i.e. in the capital.

Samāpā—SKREs 1 and 2, Jaugaḍa—A divisional headquarters of Kaliṅga, may be = present Jaugaḍa.

Sambodhi—RE 8—Present Bodhgayā, where Budda obtained Enlightenment.

Suvarṇagiri—MRE, Mysore versions—Capital of a southern Province of the empire = present Kanakagiri, according to some.

Takṣaśilā—SKRE 1—Present Taxila, capital of the north-western Province of the empire.

Tosalī—SKREs 1 and 2, Dhaulī—Possibly the capital of Kaliṅga ; might have been situated close to present Dhaulī near Bhuvaneswar.

Ujjayinī—SKRE 1—Present Ujjain ; capital of the western Province of the empire.

14. Officials and Functionaries

The following are mentioned in the Inscriptions :

Dāpaka—(RE 6—Royal almoner.

Dūtas—RE 13—Envoys.

Kāraṇakas—MRE, Yerrāg.—Village officials, Sansk. kāraṇika, cf. Bengali kerānī = clerk, and the Karaṇa caste of Orissa, among whom the percentage of literates is the highest, next to the Brahmans.

Lipikara—MRE, Mysore versions ; RE 14—Engraver of the inscriptions.

Mahāmātras—MRE, Mysore versions ; RE 6 ; SKREs 1, 2 ; SPE ; APQGE ; PEs 1, 7—Ministers or highest officials who bore various

designations according to the nature of their duties, viz. *Anta-M°*—PE 1—in charge of frontier tracts; *Dharma-M°*—REs 5, 12; PE 7—in charge of matters concerning religious affairs and practices, charities etc; *Nagara* (or *Nagaraka*)-*vyavahāraka-M°*—SKRE 1—in charge of judicial affairs in towns, cf. Paura-vyavahārikas mentioned by Kauṭilya; *Rāja-vācanika-M°*—SKREs 1, 2, Jaugaḍa—probably sent out on very special missions?; *Stry-adhyakṣa-M°*—RE 12—in charge of matters concerning women, cf. Gaṇikādhyakṣa mentioned by Kauṭilya.

Pariṣad—REs 3, 6—Council of Ministers.

Prativedakas—RE 6—Secretaries, reporters.

Prādeśikas—RE 3—Probably officials in charge of administrative divisions or districts.

Puruṣas—PEs 1, 4, 7—Either a general name for state officials or for a special class thereof.

Rajjukas—MRE, Yerrāg.; RE 3; PEs 4, 7—Important officials comparable with the present Sub-Divisional Officers or Tehṣildars, who were entrusted with executive, judicial and revenue work; the name is derived from *rajju*, 'rope' used in measuring land.

Rāṣṭrikas—MRE, Yerrāg.—Probably ranked below the Rajjukas.

Śrāvaka—RE 6—King's herald or announcer of royal proclamations.

Vraja-bhūmikas—RE 12—Functions obscure; in charge of outlying regions, places of public resort, pilgrimage etc?

Yuktas—RE 3—Mentioned also in the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and by Kauṭilya.

15. Religious Communities

Aśoka refers repeatedly to Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas. By Brāhmaṇa he did not mean those who were Brahmans by birth only; he meant those among them engaged in religious, priestly and teaching work. By Sramaṇa were meant those mendicants and ascetics who adhered to heterodox philosophical and religious views, of whom the following being the principal ones are mentioned by Aśoka:

Ājīvikas—BCIs 1, 2; PE 7—A nude sect believing in the existence of individual souls, in the efficacy of physical mortifications, and in predestined fate, their last Tīrthaṅkara having been Gośāla Maṅkhaliputra, an elder contemporary of and who predeceased Mahāvīra, the Jaina Tīrthaṅkara. It is held by some that early in his ascetic career,

Mahāvīra was a disciple of Gośāla for some six years, from whom Mahāvira borrowed nudity but subsequently they separated on grounds of doctrinal differences and became bitter oppononents.

Buddhists—MRE ; RE 8 ; LPI ; NPI and BBTE—There is no doubt that by *Saṃgha* in MRE, SPE, BBTE and PE 7 is meant the Order of the Buddhists. Before they received Aśoka's patronage, the Buddhists were a small sect, mostly confined to places where Buddha had lived and preached, with some adherents and small monastic establishments in other parts of the country such as the Mathurā and Ujjayinī regions, so far as we know. It was due to Aśoka that Buddhism spread further in India. As for its spreading outside India through Aśoka, there is no evidence of it in the Inscriptions although they speak of his envoys carrying his messages of Dharma to foreign countries, but the Dharma propagated by Aśoka was probably not in the form of Buddhism which was the object of his own personal devotion no doubt but which he never attempted to preach even in India. What his envoys preached abroad was very probably what Aśoka himself preached in India viz. the basic moral principles and social virtues taught in common by all Indian religions, and pacifism, non-war and international amity.

Although not mentioned in the Inscriptions, we learn from Buddhist tradition of the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon, Burma and Nepal through Aśoka's efforts. These missions were undertaken by enterprising members of the Buddhist church who were sent out, it is said, after the Third Buddhist Council held probably in the 22nd-23rd year of Aśoka's reign, which Aśoka no doubt backed most zealously with all the resources at his command. Similar religious missions might quite probably have gone as well to countries of the Hellenic world. Some scholars are of the view that Greek philosophical thought of the post-Aśokan era shows certain traits which have no organic relation with earlier Greek thought and which are more Indian in character. This may have been due to the influence of Buddhist missionaries of Aśokan times or to the closer Indo-Greek contacts established after the conquests of Alexander the Great. It is again not improbable that Indian ideas might have reached Greece through Persia even before Alexander's conquests. Further, some scholars are of the view that some Biblical stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus, some of the Parables, and the stories of some of his miracles were influenced by Buddhist legends current in the territories

north-west of India during the epochs immediately preceding and following the age of Jesus.

Although Aśoka's personal preference was for Buddhism, for the sake of which he spent large amounts of money, his charities extended to other sects as well (RE 12; PE 6) and his solicitude for their welfare was keen and sincere as is proved by his wish that all of them should live—without any fears ?—everywhere (RE 7), and by his appointment of special Mahāmātras for looking after their affairs (RE 5; PE 7). He also devoted himself very enthusiastically to establishing intercommunal harmony (MRE; REs 5, 12). For eradicating schismatic activities from the Buddhist church, he convoked the Third Buddhist Council, in which, it is represented by Ceylonese tradition, he questioned members of the Order individually regarding the Doctrine and expelled those whose answers were unsatisfactory. SPE shows the state actions he ordered for the suppression of schism within the Buddhist church.

Ceylonese tradition says that Aśoka's Buddhist preceptor was the monk Maudgaliputra Tiṣya whose serene countenance attracted Aśoka and that it was under his presidentship that Aśoka transacted the proceedings of the Third Buddhist Council. Northern tradition however, names the monk Upagupta as Aśoka's preceptor who took his royal disciple on his pilgrimage to the holy places associated with Buddha. It has been suggested by some that the two names might have been of the same monk. But it may be that Maudgaliputra Tiṣya was probably an elderly and scholarly man, well-versed in the Buddhist scriptures and held in high esteem in the Order whereas Upagupta was a younger man who acted as the king's guide in his pilgrimages.

It is also said that the sayings of Buddha as embodied in the Appamāda-vagga section of the *Dhammapada* considerably influenced Aśoka in his conversion to Buddhism and continued to inspire him throughout his life. There is nothing improbable in this, for teachings on 'exertion' would naturally appeal strongly to a man of Aśoka's active temperament.

Another probable influence that might have helped to draw Aśoka to Buddhism has not received any notice from historians so far—viz. his queen 'Devi' who lived in Vidiśā, the mother of Mahendra and Saṅghamitrā. Ceylonese tradition records that Mahendra before setting out on his journey to Ceylon, went to Vidiśā to meet his

mother who took him to a beautiful vihāra on Cetiyagiri (=Caitya-giri, 'the hill with a *caitya* or chapel', also called Vedisagiri, 'the hill of Vidiśā' in Ceylonese tradition, identified with Sānchī).

It has been surmised that Aśoka's monuments at Sānchī, a place which had no association with Buddha's life, were due to his love for this Vidiśā queen. It might have been so; but Bairāṭ too which had no associations with Buddha, was similarly honoured by Aśoka. It is probable that Aśoka's attentions to Sānchī and Bairāṭ were due to there being small Buddhist monastic establishments at these places from before Aśoka's time, for even during Buddha's time, some of the disciples belonged to the Ujjayinī region. The shrines at Sānchī and Bairāṭ being situated in outlying regions, might have preserved B ddha's relics, lost or stolen in the main holyland of Buddhism, and hence perhaps Aśoka's monuments. That the Vidiśā queen took Mahendra to a vihāra on Cetiyagiri suggests not only the existence of a Buddhist shrine there but also her attachment to it. Archaeologists are of the view that Aśoka's pillar at Sānchī was probably erected before the Lumbinī pillar (in the 20th regnal year) and so were also perhaps his stūpa and vihāra there, while Mahendra's mission to Ceylon took place probably after the Third Council which decided to send religious missions abroad and which was probably held sometime after the 20th regnal year. Even if the vihāra to which the queen took Mahendra was the one built by Aśoka and not an older one, it shows the queen's great devotion to Buddhism.

Buddhist tradition has it that the Vidiśā queen did not go to Pāṭaliputra but lived in Vidiśā, which means perhaps that she did not live in Pāṭaliputra permanently but only occasionally or perhaps that she lived more in Vidiśā than in Pāṭaliputra. A probable reason for her doing so—as it is rather unusual for a king's beloved consort to shun the glamour and luxuries of palace life —was her strong religious-mindedness and her devotion to the Sānchī shrine, or in other words, she had been a Buddhist even before Aśoka became so, and she was perhaps in the habit of taking to monastic life periodically as Aśoka is said to have done later. According to the Ceylonese *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, (11th cent.) she was descended from a branch of the Śākyas that had migrated to Vidiśā during Buddha's life-time. Unless it were a pious legend invented to give her a sacred line of descent, it would explain her devotion to Buddhism.

The same work also states that it was she who built the mahāvihāra of Vedisagiri.

That Buddhist tradition gave all the credit for Aśoka's conversion to Buddhism to Maudgaliputra Tiṣya (or to Upagupta), to the *Appamāda-vagga* etc and none to the Vidiśā queen might be due to the monks' dislike of giving any prominence to women in regard to church matters. Is it possible that 'the second queen Kāruvākī' referred to in APQGE was this Vidiśā queen? Aśoka might have been already married when he met the Vidiśā merchant's beautiful daughter who therefore became his second queen. What happened to her son Ujjeniya is not known and he might have died early, and Mahendra and Saṅghamitrā too, by taking to monastic life, were as it were, dead to the world. So when she gave birth to Tīvara after perhaps a long interval, she came to be known as 'the mother of Tīvara,' for it was customary for a woman to be known formally as the mother of one of her children, usually the eldest son. The large charities of the 'second queen' of APQGE would also agree with the religious disposition of the Vidiśā queen. The reason why APQGE, although not properly a *Dharma-lipi*, came to be engraved by mistake on the Allahabad pillar, as we have ventured to suggest, was not only that this edict referred to various Dharma-acts of charity but also perhaps that these charities were by a queen who was known to be as staunch a Buddhist as Aśoka.

Nirgranthas—PE 7—i.e. the 'Bondless', the name by which the Jainas were known in ancient times. Their last Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra was an elder contemporary of Buddha but the sect was at least two and a half centuries older than Mahāvīra. They and the Buddhists were hostile to each other. They believed in individual souls, in the efficacy of physical mortifications for shaking off the soul's bondage in physical matter (*pudgala*), and in *puruṣakāra* and *karma* as deciding the destiny of man.

16. Aśoka's Conception of Dharma

The virtues that Aśoka desired to inculcate among his subjects were the following as referred to again and again in one or other of the Inscriptions, viz., mercifulness towards all living beings; charities and gifts to Brahmans, ascetics, friends, relatives and acquaintances; truthfulness, purity of thought, honesty, gentleness, gratitude, self-

restraint, steadfastness, non-injury to animal life and fear of sin; moderation in spending and in ownership; respectfulness towards parents, elders and teachers; proper behaviour towards Brahmans, ascetics, relatives, servants and slaves; avoidance of ferocity, cruelty, anger, pride and envy; exertion in good works; relieving the sufferings of the aged, the indigent and the sick; toleration of and respectfulness towards others' faiths; avoidance of meaningless rituals; avoidance of sectarian bigotry, etc.

It will be observed that the Dharma advocated by Aśoka consisted in those elements that form the basic teachings of all Indian religions, with this exception that he lays emphasis on non-killing of life as was taught by Buddhism and to a much greater extent by Jainism. The Upaniṣads speak of it too but Vedic Brahmanism extensively practised the killing of animals in religious sacrifices and meat-eating was common in society. It is further to be noted that Aśoka holds up before men a happy life in heaven as the goal of Dharma. He refers to the gods but mentions none by name and never speaks of worshipping or propitiating them. He does not seem to know of any all-God. His emphasis is on the practice of morality of a social kind; his religion is social ethics, "discharge of one's debts to all beings", promotion of the well-being of all creatures, establishment of relations of harmony, tolerance, understanding and mutual respect among all communities. He also advocates the cultivation of those virtues of a personal kind that conduce to peace of mind and equanimity. His conception of religion again is not of the sentimental, emotional, ritualistic or even of the metaphysical or meditative type but is essentially of an active, humanitarian and benevolent character, viz. to be good and to do good to others. The road to heaven recommended by him is not renunciation although with great wisdom he advises "spending little and owning little". The desires for spending much and owning much arise, it may be pointed out, from egoism, vanity, conceit, greed and self-aggrandisement which in their turn lead to competitive selfishness and excessive acquisitiveness resulting in the deprivation of others—the root cause of all capitalistic evils. The quintessence of Dharma again, in Aśoka's view, consisted in *śīla* or good conduct, and not in creed, doctrine, rituals, ceremonies or worship. Progress in Dharma was to be determined solely by the measure of one's sincere exertion in practising it. *Parākrama* or *utthāna* that Aśoka frequently speaks of as the road to religious progress

is identical with *apramāda* of Buddha, another word for *vīrya* or *puruṣakāra* i.e. manly exertion.

It is remarkable that Aśoka speaks of no creedal or doctrinal philosophy at all in connection with Dharma. Liberation, meditation, asceticism and renunciation etc that occupy Indian religious thought so much, are never referred to by him whereas the goal of religious aspiration that he frequently stresses is attainment of heaven. Even though an ardent Buddhist himself, he asks no one to adopt it. Nirvāṇa, *dhyāna*, the doctrines of sorrow, impermanence, non-soul, the Chain of Causation etc that figure so prominently in Buddhist teachings are never mentioned by him. It is obvious therefore that he regarded the choice of a philosophical system or of a religious creed as everyone's personal concern just as the teachings of Buddha were for himself. In BBTE, his message to the Buddhist Order, the sacred texts that he recommends for constant study not only by the laity but by the ascetics as well, relate not to metaphysical or philosophical topics but to the cultivation of moral and mental qualities. This was perhaps the approach of primitive Buddhism too towards the common man, before whom the ideal that was held up was not nirvāṇa but happiness in this world and in heaven, to be earned by living a good life and by doing good to others.

Aśoka's goodwill towards all sects is beyond question and so is his solicitude for their progress and welfare. But his tolerance and liberalism towards religious bodies were not too supine. He expected of them a very high standard of mental qualities and moral behaviour (REs 7,12) and notwithstanding all his regard for others' beliefs, his tolerance had its limits, and what his rational and robust mind found to be wrong, he had no hesitation in criticising, condemning or prohibiting. The probable effect of the prohibition of animal sacrifice in religious rites and of *samāja* festivities has already been mentioned (p. 11). His disparagement of the utility of exhibiting edifying scenes of heavenly life for promoting Dharma (RE 4) and of the performance of meaningless ceremonials (RE 9) shows his rational mind, but it surely did not please the priestly class, for whom these exhibitions and ceremonials were sources of earning. The strong measures he took in expelling schismatic members of the Buddhist Order (SPE) show that his great devotion to a particular faith or religious Order did not make him blind or indulgent to the faults of its votaries.

How pervasive Aśoka's conception of Dharma was and how he attempted to ennoble many a common practice by making it subserve the higher ends of Dharma are exemplified by the following : declaration that preaching the Dharma to his subjects and to all the world by personal example of the practice thereof on the part of himself and his successors was the highest kingly duty (MRE; REs 4-6, 8,10 13, 14; SKRE 2; PEs 2,6,7); employment of state officials for the propagation of Dharma (MRE ; REs 3, 5, 12, 13; SKREs 1, 2; PEs 1, 4, 7); instructions to people and to officials to exhort each other in practising Dharma (REs 9, 11; SKRE 1); engraving of *Dharmalipis* in place of the inscriptions glorifying conquests etc (as of the Persian kings); substitution of conquest by war by conquest by Dharma (RE 13); oral proclamations on Dharma as on other official matters (MRE; PE 7); erection of Dharma-pillars like the erection of monumental or ornamental pillars (PE 7); appointment of Dharma-Mahāmātras like other ministers (RE 5); substitution of the royal hunt by Dharma-tours (RE 8), and of customary religious ceremonies by Dharma practices (RE 9); recommendation of the gift of Dharma as being superior to all other kinds of gifts (REs 9, 11).

The various acts of a humanitarian character initiated by Aśoka, mentioned in the Inscriptions, were these viz. forbidding of the killing of animal life (RE 1; PEs 2, 5, 7) ; opening of hospitals for men and animals and supply of medicinal herbs for them in and outside his dominion (RE 2); digging of wells, planting of trees, opening of water-sheds and rest-houses for the convenience of travellers and animals (RE 2, PE 7); mitigation of hardships on prisoners, grant of privileges to them and emphasising the need of the impartial administration of justice (RE 5; SKRE 1; PEs 4, 5, 7); and provisions for the maintenance of Brahmans, ascetics, the aged and the destitute (REs 5, 8; PE 7).

17. Aśoka's Administrative Policy

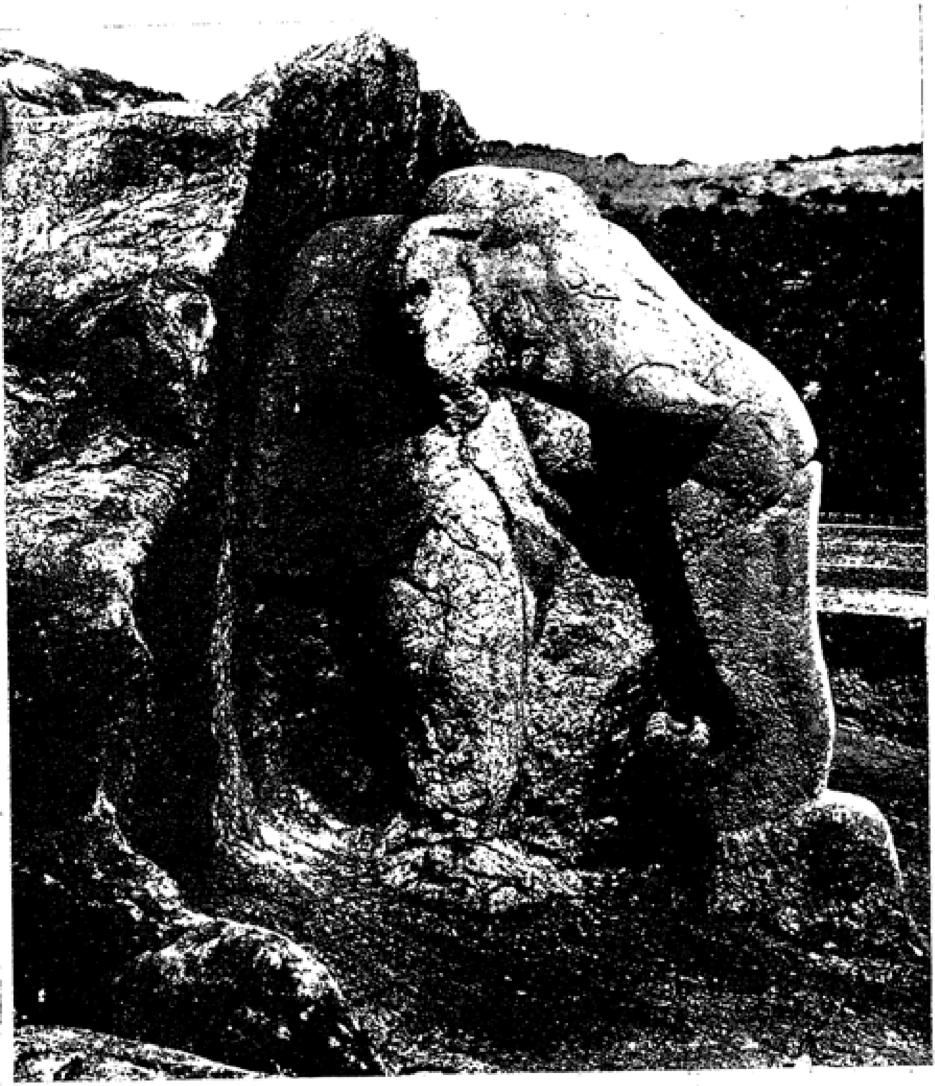
Just as in some of the Inscriptions Aśoka calls upon his sons and successors to teach Dharma to the people by their own personal example (REs 4-6, 13 ; SKRE 1 ; PE 7), so does he with the same end in view refer in some of the Inscriptions to the duties specially of his officials viz. to teach Dharma to the people (REs 3, 13 ; SKRE 1 ; PEs 1, 4, 7) ; to promote the welfare of the people and mitigate their sufferings (RE 5) ; to prevent communal disharmony (RE 12) ; to



Capital of uninscribed Asoka Pillar found at Rāmpūrvā (Dist. Champaran, Bihar), National Museum, New Delhi *Copyright Archaeological Dept., Govt. of India*



Mauryan Elephant capital at Saṅkisa (ancient Sāṅkāśya, Pali Saṅkissa), Furakhabad Dist., U.P.
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Elephant above the Asoka Inscriptions at Dhaulī, Orissa
Copyright Archaeological Dept., Govt. of India

prevent schismatic activities in the Buddhist Order (SPE); to administer justice impartially, conscientiously and honestly (SKRE 1; PE 4); to reassure the Borderers of his policy of peace and goodwill (SKRE 2). The ideals he desired his officials to follow have been very nobly expressed by him in the closing words of PE 1, and in PEs 4 (specially in the simile of the nurse) and 7.

SKRE 1 undoubtedly presupposes grave miscarriage of justice and highhandedness on the part of some provincial administrators. PE 4 also hints at irregularities in judicial administration when it recommends uniformity of procedure and uniformity of decisions. It is apparent that Aśoka kept a sharp eye on all administrative affairs, particularly those relating to judicial matters, these being his special responsibility as king, the fountainhead of justice. It may reasonably be inferred that he took strong measures when necessary to stamp out dishonesty, corruption and incompetance from the public administration as he did to check mischievous schismatic activities in the Buddhist Order, for he certainly possessed far greater powers over his officials than over the church.

The appointment of the Dharma-Mahāmātras and employment of permanent state officials for the purpose of propagating the Dharma were novel features introduced by Aśoka in the system of public administration.

Some common notions held regarding the probable breakdown or slackening of the administrative machinery owing to Aśoka's religious idealism, which is said to have hastened the downfall of the empire after his death, are not borne out by evidence obtained from the Inscriptions. That his ideas and activities antagonised many, officials included, is likely enough as has already been indicated, but that did not mean that the administration was weakened in any manner. RE 13 and SKRE 2 show that Aśoka's conciliatory, pacific and generous policy did not make him overlook all faults on the part of others, for he said he would forgive wrong-doers 'as far as it was possible to do so, which is certainly different from reducing oneself to a state of blind tolerance. The warning he gave to the wild forest-dwellers (RE 13) of the might he yet possessed, notwithstanding his pacifism, capable of crushing them if they did not mend their ways, shows that he maintained a strong military force in order to reduce to submission all adverse situations. That no evidence is available of any revolts in any part of the

empire during his life-time, inspite of all the forces of antagonism raised by him, is also an indication of the strength and soundness of his administration. The Mauryan administration was harsh and oppressive, its criminal law very severe and its imperialism ruthlessly aggressive. Aśoka humanised the administration to a great extent and mitigated many of the rigours of prison-life (RE 5; PE 4). That inspite of his adoption of *ahiṃsā,* he did not abolish the death penalty for criminals is quite clear from his grant of a respite of three days to those condemned to death (PE 4).

Aśoka's charities and other expenditure for Dharma work were certainly lavish and must have meant a serious drain on the treasury. That he occasionally, if not often, exceeded the bounds of prudence in this matter, may be inferred from the reference in RE 6 to the opposition by the Council of ministers to his verbal orders relating thereto. The *Divyāvadāna* narrates a highly exaggerated story of how a court conspiracy was formed to prevent his large gifts to the Buddhist Order, which Hiuen Tsang too repeats in substance, until all that Aśoka possessed and could give to the Saṃgha was only the half of an *āmalaka* fruit. But if the word *aṭha-bhāgiye* in LPI meant "paying only an eighth share of the produce" and not "partaking of riches", it would show that though extravagant in giving, Aśoka was careful enough not to curtail sources of revenue too much, even in the case of such a holy place as Lumbinī which one would expect, he would readily make fully revenue-free.

18. Aśokan Art

Not much remains of all that was built or carved in Mauryan times, except Aśoka's inscriptions and some of his pillars and their capitals. Of Candragupta's capital at Pāṭaliputra, described by Megasthenes as 9 miles long and 1½ mile wide, built at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Son, nothing has survived except a few wooden beams and the remains of a section of the wooden palisade that surrounded the town, which, Megasthenes says, was pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows, and was surmounted by 570 towers and had 64 gates. Fragments found on the site of Pāṭaliputra of 80 stone-pillars with a polish associated with Mauryan craftsmanship, it is surmised, might have belonged to a great hall with a wooden surperstructure, subsequently destroyed by fire, that was built, by which Mauryan king we do not know, probably in imitation of the

'hundred-pillared hall' of Persepolis. The ruins of Aśoka's palace in Pāṭaliputra evoked the wonders of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien (beginning of the 5th cent. A.D.) who ascribed its construction to 'genii.' The Tibetan historian Tārānātha (c. 17th cent. A.D.) attributed the construction of Aśoka's buildings to *'yakṣas'*. These expressions indicate the hugeness of the structures, their novelty, and perhaps also that the craftsmen were foreigners.

Of the large number (84,000 according to Buddhist tradition) of Buddhist structures built by Aśoka in different places of India, nothing has survived except the remains of a few stūpas, some pillars and capitals, and the Barābar cave dwellings for ascetics. Of the stūpas, what remains is mostly the site only as in Sārnāth. The present Dharmarājika stūpa of Taxila attributed to Aśoka (the Dharmarāja, 'king of Dharma') belongs really to Kuṣān times (c. 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.). Aśoka's stūpa in Sārnāth (also known as Dharmarājika), when excavated, was found encased in six successive stūpas built between the 2nd and the 12th centuries A.D. It was surmounted by a monolithic railing with Mauryan polish, bits of which have been found, which probably formed its crowning *harmikā* or railed pavilion, from which rose the shaft of the crowning umbrella. The original Aśokan stūpa of Sānchī, now concealed in the core of the present and larger Great Stūpa built about a century after Aśoka, was also crowned with a stone umbrella with Mauryan polish, pieces of which were recovered on the spot. Of the Aśokan structures at Bairāṭ have survived only bits of the foundation, fragments of two pillars, and pieces of a stone umbrella and a bowl bearing the Mauryan polish, the umbrella being probably the crowing member of the stūpa. Nothing remains of the *vajrāsana* or 'diamond-seat' altar and the enclosure said to have been constructed by Aśoka, the former under and the latter around the Bodhi Tree at Bodhgayā as depicted in early sculptural representations of the shrine and also described by the Chinese pilgrims. The railing at Bodhgayā still seen belongs to Śuṅga times, about a century later than Aśoka. The stone-railing which Aśoka says in LPI he built at Lumbinī, and the stūpa mentioned in NPI, have also disappeared.

The remains of the Aśokan stūpa, now concealed in the present Great Stūpa of Sānchī, showed on excavation that it was a low structure of a diameter of about 60 ft., built of large bricks. It was presumably hemispherical in shape with a raised terrace at the base, enclosed by a

wooden railing. The original Aśoka stūpa of Sārnāth too was found on excavation to be brick-built, hemispherical in shape, of a diameter of about 60 ft. and with a low terracc at the base. The Bairāṭ structures were found to have been built of bricks and wood. These facts established by archaeologists, afford us a rough picture of the general make-up of Aśokan stūpas, at the entrance (or entrances) of which stood a stone pillar.

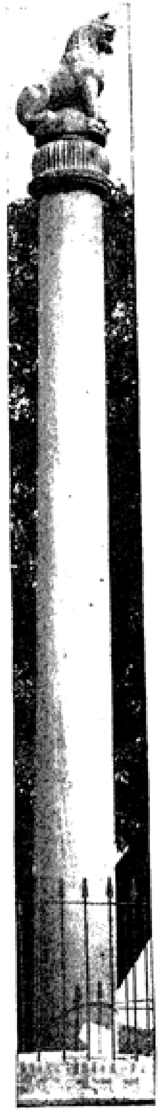
Regarding the origin of stūpas, it may be surmised that the Vedic Aryans probably buried their dead, over which a mound was raised, enclosed by a fencing of some kind. The pre-Aryan Indians probably cremated the dead although burial was not unknown, specially in the earlier period. It was also an ancient practice to collect the remains of the funeral pyre in a vessel, mostly earthen, and bury it. Over this burial, a mound—borrowed from the Vedic Aryan practice ?—was probably raised in case of saintly persons of eminence, from which perhaps the Aśokan stūpa developed. Just as the post-Aśokan stūpas were built larger and larger as centuries passed, occasionally using stone instead of bricks, so the Aśokan stūpa too was a more durable and enlarged version of its earthen prototype, for Aśoka used bricks instead of earth, made the mound larger and hemispherical, crowned it with a *harmikā* and umbrella of stone, added a terrace at the base and made the fencing with a wooden railing. The *harmikā*, umbrella and the base-terrace might have characterised, although on a smaller scale and made of less durable material, pre-Aśokan earthen stūpas as well. Spots of very special sanctity, such as Buddha's birthplace in Lumbinī and probably the Bodhi Tree and other places too, were given by him a stone railing.

The Barābar cave dwellings with their distinctive Mauryan polish, cxcavated by Aśoka and his grandson, king Daśaratha for Ājīvika ascetics, were the first of their kind in India. That they were lithic copies of thatch-roofed wooden structures has been very clearly established by archaeologists. This style of rock-cut architecture was practised in many parts of India, more particularly in the west, with great elaboration from the 2nd century B.C. to the 10th century A.D., and the earliest phases of these post-Aśokan developments too show clearly that they were lithic copies of wooden structures. It is probable, some think, that Aśoka adopted his style of rock-cut caves from the Achaemenian tombs on the cliffs of Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustum, cut during 335-330 B.C.

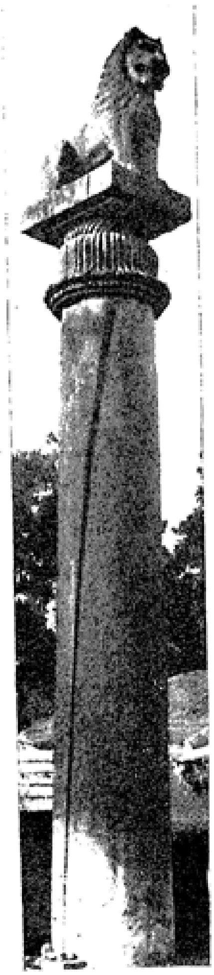


Above—Cyclopean stone wall or Outer Fortification on the tops of hills around Rājgīr (ancient Rājagṛiha, Dt. Patna, Bihar), total length about 30 miles, c. 6th-5th cent. B.C., the earliest known pre-Asokan stone structure in India.
Below—Remains of the wooden palisade around ancient Pāṭaliputra (Patna, Bihar), 4th cent. B.C. *Copyright Archaeological Dept., Govt. of India*





Inscribed Asoka Pillar at
Lauriya-Nandangarh,
Dt. Champaran, Bihar, the only
Asokan Pillar found standing
unbroken *in situ*



Uninscribed Mauryan
Pillar at Basārh-Bakhirā,
Dist. Muzaffarpur, Bihar



Uninscribed Mauryan
Pillar at Kosam (ancient
Kauśāmbī), Dist. Allahabad, U.P.

The most important and interesting objects of Aśokan art that have survived are the pillars and some capitals. These pillars are round and slightly tapering monolithic shafts of great dignity, exquisite finish, simplicity and beauty, bearing a highly lustrous glasslike polish, made of buff-coloured sandstone, mostly perhaps from Chunār in Mirzapur District, U. P. The glasslike Mauryan polish was imparted not by the application of any kind of varnish but, as shown by microscopic examination, by the use of abrasives. The pillars are of a height of about 30 to 45 ft. with an ornamental capital, lost in many places, surmounted by powerful animal sculpture. The surviving capitals consist of the following viz. (a) *a single lion* found at Rāmpūrvā (pillar inscribed) in Bihar (now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta), as at Lauriyā-Nandangarh (pillar inscribed) and as at Basārh-Bakhirā (pillar uninscribed and therefore doubtful if really Aśokan), both in Bihar; or (b) *a single bull* on a second pillar (uninscribed) found at Rāmpūrvā (now in the National Museum, New Delhi); or (c) *a single elephant* (pillar not found, doubtful if Aśokan) as at Saṅkisa in Furakhabad Dist. of U.P.; or (d) *four lions* seated back to back facing the four directions as at Sārnāth and Sānchī (both pillars inscribed). Mention should also be made of the elephant carved above the Aśoka inscriptions on the Dhaulī rock in Orissa, but we are not sure if it is Aśokan although its workmanship is quite good. There is also a crude drawing of an elephant alongside the Aśoka inscriptions on the Kālsī rock, which may perhaps be post-Aśokan.

On the heads of the four Sārnāth lions once rested a stone *dharma-cakra* of 32 spokes, fragments of which were recovered. The Sānchī lions too were probably surmounted by a similar wheel as would appear from some local sculptural representations. All the capitals have a round abacus—except at Basārh-Bakhirā where it is square-shaped, decorated at Sārnāth with four *dharma-cakras* resembling the wheels of a cart, each with 24 spokes, now incorporated in the national flag of India. Between each pair of these *dharma-cakras* figures an animal viz. an elephant, a bull, a horse and a lion respectively. The abaci of the other capitals are decorated with representations of honeysuckle, palmette, lotus and geese. The base of every capital is of the shape of an inverted lotus (or bell ?). Of all the capitals, that of Sārnāth is the most impressive, now adopted in the state seal of India.

The animals on these capitals viz. the elephant, bull, horse and

lion are said by some to be the 'guardians of the four quarters' but more possibly they are symbols of Buddha. The elephant stands for

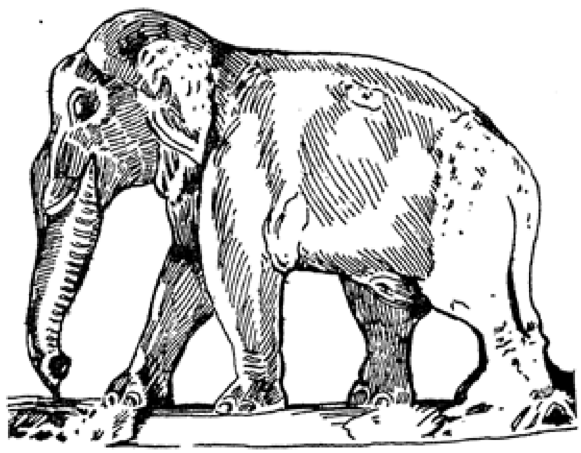


Figure of elephant on the Sārnāth Pillar abacus.

Buddha's descent on earth from heaven as his mother dreamt before conception of a white elephant entering her womb, and it grew in course of time to be the symbol *par excellence* of Buddha. The bull



Figure of bull on the Sārnāth Pillar abacus.

stands for Buddha's human birth as he is said to have been born when the zodiacal Sign of Taurus i.e. the Bull was the 'dominant' Sign. Some have taken this "dominant" zodiacal sign as indicating the position of the sun (i.e. the month of Jyaiṣṭha) but in Indian astrology, the 'dominant' zodiacal sign, the basic feature of a horoscope, is not the position of the sun but that of the moon; and if the Sign of the Bull indicated the position of the moon at Buddha's birth, it may incidentally be observed, the birth could never have taken place on the April-May full-moon, as now observed as his birthday, for according to Indian astronomy, on the Vaiśākhī full-moon the moon is in the Sign either of Libra or of Scorpio (the sun being in the Sign either of Aries or of Taurus). It may be possible that the Vaiśākhī full-moon, traditionally celebrated as a sacred day, came to be identified with Buddha's birth in later times.

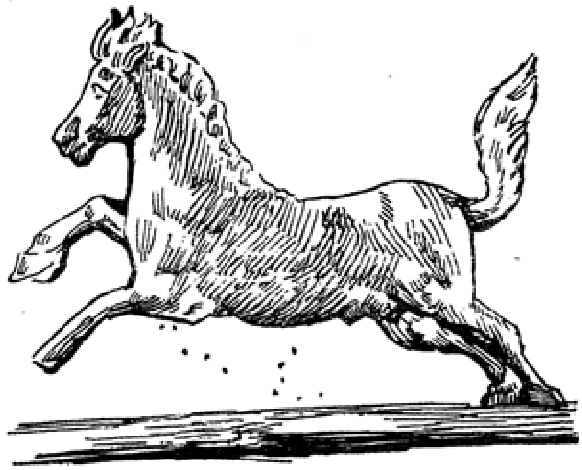


Figure of horse on the Sārnāth Pillar abacus.

The horse stands for Buddha's renunciation as he is said to have left home on horseback. The lion represents Buddha as the great preacher whose teachings defeat and silence all rivals, a symbolism which is further accentuated by the lions facing the four directions and by being surmounted by the *dharma-cakra*. The wheel in the *Dharma-cakra*, some think, symbolises sovereignty or dominion, but perhaps it referred to the eternal cycle of the Chain of Causation

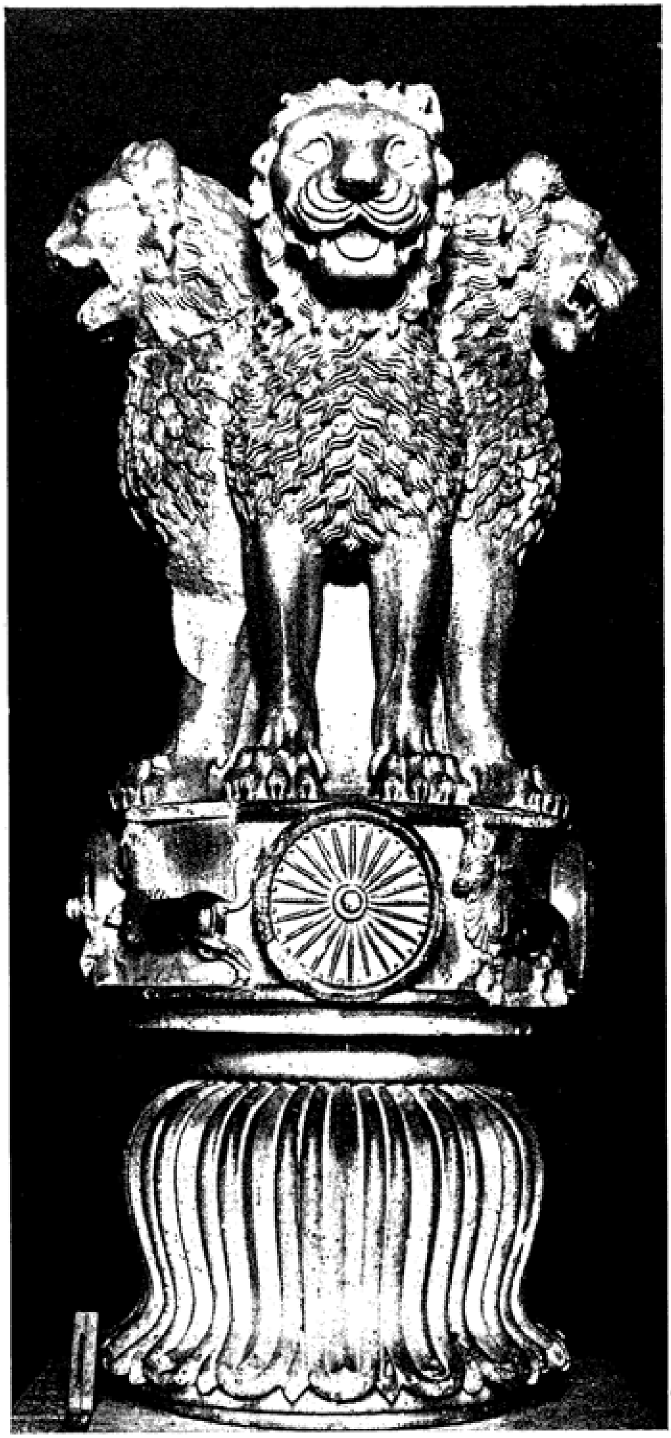
(or Dependent Origination, Conditioned Genesis) as propounded by Buddha in his doctrine of *Pratītya -samutpāda*.



Figure of lion on the Sārnāth Pillar abacus.

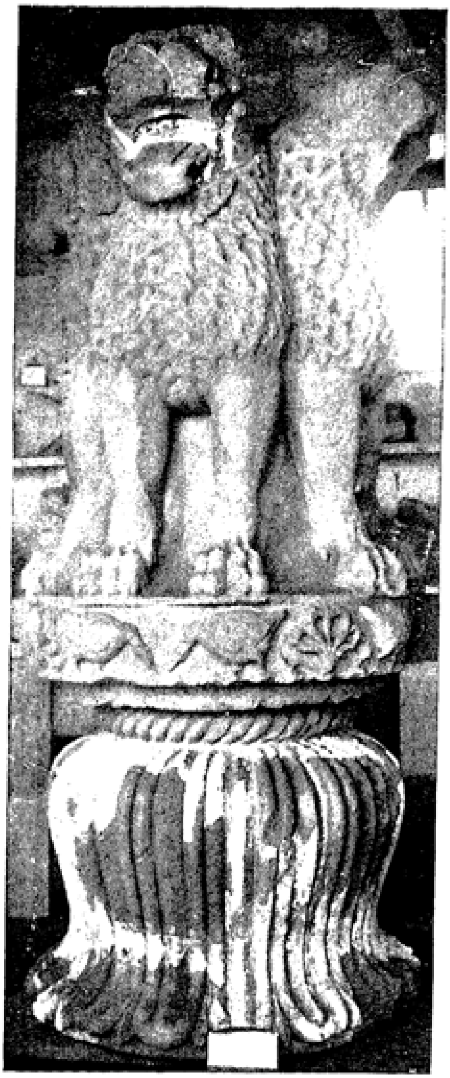
The simplicity and graceful dignity of Aśoka's pillars and the liveliness and vigour of many of the animal figures have evoked the admiration of critics. Some of these animal figures are said to deserve a very high place in the history of animal sculpture and to be unrivalled in the art of the ancient world.

The Aśokan pillar may have been the lithic form given by him to the flagstaff of wood or bamboo, usually found in front of an Indian shrine. The animal figure capital, it is surmised, may have been suggested by similar figures that used to adorn the banner on the staff. Post-cremational memorial posts too, common in India, may have been the parent of Aśoka's pillars. Excavations in 1954 at the site of the famous Ghoṣitārāma monastery of Kauśāmbī showed that ordinary monks were memorialised by the erection of small pillars, their funerary relics being buried in earthen pots in the floors adjoining the small stūpas. Pillars of an ornamental or monumental character, of course made of wood, were well-known in India. Pali literature mentions *inda-khila,* explained by the commentator Buddhaghoṣa as "a pillar made of strong wood" (*sāra-dārumaya-tthambha*) that stood in front of city-gates. Candragupta's palace,



Capital of inscribed Asoka Pillar at Sārnāth, Sārnāth Museum

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Capital of inscribed Asoka Pillar at Sānchī, Bhopal, Sānchī Museum

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Capital of the inscribed Rāmpūrvā Asoka Pillar, Ind. Museum, Calcutta

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as described by the Greeks, had a large number of beautifully carved pillars, presumably wooden.

Several problems face us in connection with Aśokan sculpture. Like his inscriptions, his pillars and sculpture too are wholly unprecedented in Indian history, for no stone sculpture belonging to the many centuries that intervened between the Indus Valley civilization and Aśoka's times has survived that can claim kinship with the art of Aśoka. Again, though the Mauryan polish lingered on in India for some time after Aśoka as exemplified in the caves donated by his grandson Daśaratha, the art of Aśoka's craftsmen disappeared from India after Aśoka as abruptly as its coming had been. The oldest post-Aśokan stone sculpture in India is found (*i*) on the railings of Stūpa No. 2 of Sānchī, (*ii*) on the Bharhut railings and gateway (now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta), (*iii*) on the Bodhgayā railing, and (*iv*) on the gateways of Sānchī Stūpa No. 1 (Great Stūpa), of which the first three belong to the Śuṅga (c. 2nd-1st cent. B.C.) and the last to the Andhra (c. 1st cent. B.C.) age. Although the craftsmen of Sānchī, Bharhut and Bodhgayā were unquestionably Indian, they exhibit a style far inferior to that of Aśoka's craftsmen. While the art of Aśoka shows that the craftsmen had generations of experience to their credit, early post-Aśokan stone sculpture shows that the craftsmen still thought in terms of wood although working on stone; they were skilled no doubt in working on metal, wood, ivory, clay etc but appear to have been novices in working on stone. The lack, therefore, on Indian soil of immediate predecessors as well as successors of Aśoka's art raises a strong presumption that his craftsmen came from outside, who, after Aśoka's death and the break-up of the Mauryan empire, disappeared from India.

Some however, are of the view that Aśokan sculpture developed out of the prehistoric Indus Valley art although the intermediate links of this evolution, like those of the evolution of the Aśokan script, are not yet obtainable. It has further been argued that the figures of the elephant and the humped bull on the Sārnāth abacus have been so faithfully portrayed in their typical Indian character as would not have been possible, had not the sculptor been long familiar therewith. But against this, it has also been pointed out that the eyes of this elephant are not true to life, being too large, and that neither the elephant nor the bull is particularly well done at Sārnāth, compared

to the magnificent bulls of the Indus Valley 'seals' and to some of the elephants of Sānchī, whereas the horse on the Sārnāth abacus, the most spirited of the four animals depicted, is typically Greek and unparallelled elsewhere in Indian art. Critics have pointed out again certain specific features, in respect of which the Aśokan lions at Sārnāth and Sānchī resemble Greek works of the same class but differ radically from the Indian, viz. the distinctive treatment of the "cheekbones and moustache" and the deep sinking of the eyes contrasted with the protruding eyes of the lions of Indian art. It has also been pointed out that it is not correct to say that the elephant and the humped bull were unknown outside India, for the former was a common sight in Seleucid and Bactrian armies and the latter had a range far beyond the western borders of India.

It may probably be argued that Aśoka's craftsmen were indigenous but trained by foreign masters. But so far as available evidence shows, it is doubtful if Indian craftsmen were skilled enough on stone at that time to be apprenticed under foreign masters for the production of work of so high an order as Aśoka's ; secondly, as has already been mentioned, the quality of Aśokan sculpture shows beyond doubt that those who produced it were no novices but had generations of stone sculptural traditions behind them ; and thirdly, if Aśoka's craftsmen were indigenous, it is difficult to explain why all vestiges of their art should disappear from India so quickly after Aśoka.

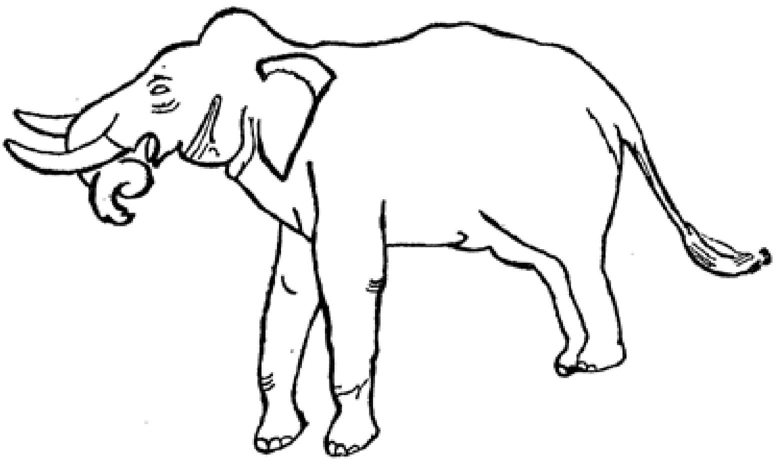
On the other hand, if Aśoka's carftsmen were foreign as appears probable, the question as to from where they came is not easy to solve. The 'Mauryan' polish, the pillars and the inverted lotus (or bell ?) of the base of the capitals are common features in Achaemenian sculpture and so also are the animal capital and some of the abacus floral motifs. The Achaemenian animal capitals were designed to be ornamental brackets of pillars supporting beams of the roof, but while the Achaemenian pillars were meant for decorating halls, Aśoka gave to his pillars as well as to the capitals an entirely new significance to subserve his purpose of propagating the Dharma, just as the rock-cut Achaemenian royal tombs were transformed by him into dwellings for ascetics and rock inscriptions used by the Achaemenian kings for self-glorification were adopted by him for Dharma purposes. Some critics also maintain that Aśokan sculpture exhibits a much higher degree of excellence than its probable Achaemenian model.

As not only Persian influence which itself was the product

of the Ionians, Sardians, Medes, Egyptians etc, but more Greek influence too is seen in Aśokan sculpture, particularly in the modelling of the animal figures and in some of the decorative floral motifs, it has been surmised by critics that Aśoka's craftsmen were probably Bactrian Greeks who were well familiar with both Greek and Persian sculpture. Since the conquest of Persia by Alexander, a steady movement was going on for effecting a synthesis of the East and the West, i.e. of the best in Persian and Greek cultures. In the crude sculpture of Bharhut, Bodhgayā and Sānchī, there are a few specimens of workmanship, much superior to the general level, and there are many instances of western motifs and technique. All this, it has been suggested, was due to the dissemination in India of Asian Greek art in the form of coins, gems, terracottas, small carvings and textiles. The occurrence of Kharoṣṭhī letters as mason's marks in Bharhut points to their North-Western origin. A number of Mauryan heads and other fragments found in Sārnāth too show strong West Asian influence. It is held therefore by some that North-Western India, being closely linked with West Asia, had for long imbibed West Asian traditions and Aśoka's patronage only extended these influences further eastward. It is to be admitted however, that in the present state of our knowledge, the problems raised by Aśokan art viz. how far it was indigenous or foreign, and if the latter, who the craftsmen were, cannot be fully solved, although from the accounts of India of Candragupta's times by Greek writers, it would appear that Indian towns and houses were mostly built of wood and bricks, and all available evidence would point to superior stone-sculpture having been a Mauryan innovation in India.

The comparatively inferior workmanship of the uninscribed Basārh-Bakhirā pillar and its lion capital and of the Saṅkisa elephant capital has led some to conclude that they are probably pre-Aśokan although Mauryan, or if Aśokan, they represent an earlier phase of the work of his craftsmen. But if they were pre-Aśokan or early Aśokan, it is not explainable why the Basārh-Bakhirā and the Kauśāmbī pillars escaped being inscribed, for Aśoka had ordered that his edicts were "to be engraved on pillars wherever pillars existed". Can it be that the uninscribed Mauryan pillars, the Basārh-Bakhirā lion and the Saṅkisa elephant were post-Aśokan—the work of the foreign craftsmen of lesser ability who lingered on in India for some time after Aśoka's death ? The Kālsī elephant drawing is probably by Indian

novices. The execution of the Rāmpūrvā bull is possibly to be ascribed to foreign masters although the pillar is uninscribed, and as for the elephant above the Dhaulī Inscriptions, we do not know for certain whether it is Aśokan or post-Aśokan, while the high stylisation of the Sārnāth, Sānchī and Rāmpūrvā lions may perhaps be interpreted as pointing to a decadent colonial Greek art as might very well be expected to prevail in Bactria.



Outline of elephant drawn on the Kālsī rock.

But no matter who his craftsmen were, Aśoka's art reflects his cosmopolitan outlook and the dignity, strength, tenderness and nobility of his character. Even if its technique was foreign, its inspiration was strikingly original and its spirit and purpose fully Aśokan.

19. Aśoka's Character

Many traits of Aśoka's character have been indicated in the foregoing sections. His sincerity, earnestness and zeal, the last perhaps carried to excess sometimes, in promoting the Dharma and the welfare of his subjects are beyond doubt, and his readiness to exert himself in the public interest in fulfilment of his kingly duties was also genuine. Rational in outlook, he was bold and original in putting his ideas into practice, and strong in his convictions, he was regardless of consequences when acting up to them.

By many of his actions Aśoka must have antagonised large sections of his subjects, which probably precipitated the downfall of his empire

immediately after his death—a sequel viewed against which his wish that his work carried on by his descendants might endure very long, would appear to have been pathetically blind. It is not likely that he was unaware of the forces of opposition being raised by him, but he had too much confidence in himself and in his ideals. Restless and at times perhaps impetuous too in action, his enthusiasm probably brooked no opposition and paid but little heed to counsels of caution. For quite a long time after him when his inscriptions could still be read, how foolish all his fond hopes, viewed against the actualities, must have appeared to the readers—which perhaps further intensified the ironical significance his title 'Beloved of the gods' had come to acquire.

Aśoka often mentions the great success attained by his efforts for promoting the Dharma. His subordinates are described by him as being zealous in it and people all over India and even outside as practising it. He was perhaps not vainglorious and it is not unlikely that Dharma activities were given a great impetus among officials and the public by his example—to gain the favours of their sovereign, if not always out of genuinely pious motives. It is very likely too that accounts of his activities reached the contemporary western world. But seriously devoted to his ideals and impatient in achieving results as he was, he was perhaps easily convinced that others too were as earnest as he was, and though not actually gullible but carried away by his enthusiasm, he might have perhaps over-rated results. Some have considered many of his utterances as being tinged with megalomania but a more lenient view may be taken when it is recalled that that was the way kings accustomed to being obeyed without question were wont to speak in those days; when he dilated on the great effects of his own good deeds, he was perhaps recounting his services to a noble cause and was encouraging others to emulate him. The instincts of leading, excelling or conquering others were strong in him but he has left plenty of evidence to show how grandly he sublimated them, and it is therefore unfair to him to think that self-glorification was the principal impulse that urged him to his actions or to issuing his edicts, for he has said repeatedly that what prompted him in his activities as also in issuing his edicts was the desire that he might make his subjects truly happy in this world and in the next by leading them along the path of Dharma practices. Fame and glory he certainly

sought, but when he says in RE 10 that the only fame or glory he sought was of having given a lead to his subjects in following the Dharma, he appears to be giving sincere expression to the deepest spring of his actions.

MINOR ROCK EDICT

This inscription is found in the following places :

North India

Bairāṭ—The inscribed rock is situated about a mile NE. of Bairāṭ, the headquarters of a *tahsil*, about 42 miles NNE. of Jaipur in Rajasthan. Excavations in Bairāṭ revealed fragments of two Aśokan pillars and remains of structures that were possibly a stūpa and a monastery, both Aśokan, which show that here resided, already in Aśoka's time, a body of the Buddhist clergy.

Gujarra—A village in Datia Dist. of Vindhya Pradesh ; inscription discovered in 1954.

Rūpnāth—In Madhya Pradesh ; a place of pilgrimage, 14 miles W. of Sleemanabad station on the Jubbulpur-Katni Ry. line.

Sahasrām (*Sāse*°, *Sāsā*°, <*Sahasrāmra* or *Sahasrārāma* ? 'a place with a thousand mango trees or parks')—The inscription lies about 2 miles E. of this town, the headquarters of a sub-division of Shahabad Dist., Bihar.

South India

Brāhmagiri—In Chitaldurg Dist. of Mysore.

Gavīmaṭh—In the Kopbal area of Hyderabad (Deccan).

Jaṭiṅga-Rāmeśvara—About 4 miles from Brahmagiri.

Maskī—In Lingsagar *taluka* of Raichur Dist., Hyderabad (Deccan).

Pālkīguṇḍu—About 4 miles from Gavīmaṭh.

Rajula-Maṇḍagiri—A hamlet attached to the village Chinnahulti, 3 miles NNW. of Pattikoṇḍa in Kurnool Dist., Andhra. The inscription was discovered in 1954 and is engraved on a rock, about 10 yards from the entrance to the temple of Rāmaliṅgeśvara (Śiva).

Śiddāpura—About 4 miles from Jaṭiṅga-Rāmeśvara and Brahmagiri.

Yerrāguḍi—8 miles from Gooty Ry. station, and 20 miles from Pattikoṇḍa.

See p. 20.

MINOR ROCK EDICT

Gavīmaṭh version
Date : *Regnal year 11-12 (?) = c. 257 B.C.*
Subject : *The fruit of zeal in practising Dharma*

The Beloved of the gods[1] spoke (thus)[2] :

It is (now somewhat) more than two and a half years that I have been a lay disciple, but I had not been very zealous (throughout all this time).

It is (now somewhat) more than a year that I joined the Saṃgha[3] and have been very zealous.

Now, the gods who were unmingled with men in Jambudvīpa[4] during this time, have now been made mingled[5].

This is the fruit of zeal. Not only by the great is this capable indeed of being attained. Even by the small (person), if he is greatly[6] zealous, is heaven capable of being attained.

And for this purpose is this proclamation (made)[7], viz.—Let the small and the great be zealous, let (even) the Borderers[8] too know (it), and let (this)[9] zeal be of long duration.

And this matter will increase and it will increase greatly, and it will increase even (to) one and a half[10] times.

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1. See p. 10.
2. Supplied in some versions, hevaṃ āha.
3. See p. 30. Lit. 'I went to the Saṃgha.' In Buddhist scriptural language, 'to go to the Saṃgha' means entering monastic life, but that might not have been meant here by Aśoka, although it is probable that he entered monastic life periodically which is allowed by the Buddhist church. The Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing (7th cent.) saw an image of Aśoka in monastic garb.
4. *I.e.* India.
5. This clause appears differently in some of the other versions e.g.

[11]Devāṇaṃpiye āha[12]: sātirekāṇi[13] aḍha-tiyāṇi vasāṇi yaṃ sumi upāsake[14], no cu bādhaṃ pakaṃte[15]. Saṃvachare sātireke yaṃ me saṃghe upeti (*read* °te)[16], bādhaṃ ca me pakaṃte[17]. Se imāyaṃ velāyaṃ Jaṃbu-dīpasi amisā devā samaṇā māṇusehi, se dāṇi misā kaṭā. Pakamasa esa phale. Ṇo hi iyaṃ mahateṇeva cakiye pāpotave. [18]Khuḍakena pi pakamamīṇena vipule pi cakiye svage ārādhayitave[19]. Etāya ca aṭhāya iyaṃ sāvaṇe—[20]khuḍakā ca uḍārā ca pakamaṃtu ti, aṃtā pi ca jāṇaṃtu, cira-ṭhitīke ca pakame hotu. Iyaṃ ca aṭhe vaḍhisiti[21], vipule ca vaḍhisiti, di-yaḍhiyaṃ pi ca vaḍhisitī ti[22].

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ āha: sātirekāṇi ardha-trīṇi varṣāṇi yat asmi upāsakaḥ, no tu bāḍhaṃ prakrāntaḥ. Saṃvatsaraṃ sātirekaṃ yat mayā saṃghaḥ upetaḥ, bāḍhaṃ ca mayā prakrāntaḥ. Tat asyāṃ velāyāṃ Jambu-dvīpe amiśrāḥ devāḥ santaḥ manuṣyaiḥ, te idānīṃ miśrāḥ kṛtāḥ. Prakramasya etat phalam. No hi etat mahataiva śakyaṃ prāptum. Kṣudrakeṇa api prakramamāṇena vipulam api śakyaḥ svargaḥ ārādhayitum. Etasmai ca arthāya idaṃ śrāvaṇaṃ—kṣudrakāḥ ca udārāḥ ca prakramantām iti, antāḥ api ca jānantu, cira-sthitikaḥ ca prakramaḥ bhavatu. Ayaṃ ca arthaḥ vardhiṣyate, vipulaṃ ca vardhiṣyate, dvy-ardham api ca vardhiṣyate iti.

Rūp. 'The gods who were unmingled in Jambu-d. during this time (*kālāya*), have now been made mingled'; *Sahas.* 'The men who were unmingled with the gods during this time (*aṃtalena*) in Jambu-d., have been made mingled with the gods'; *Brahm.*, *Sidd.* 'The men who were unmingled in Jambu-d. during this time, are mingled with the gods'; *Mask.* 'The gods who were unmingled formerly (*pure*) in Jambu-d., have now become mingled'; *Yerr.* 'The men who were unmingled with the gods during this time, have

Continued on next page

Continued from p. 53

now become mingled.' The meaning is not clear. What probably Aśoka meant was that by his efforts men were made godlike in character.

6. *Vipule* is taken by some as an adj. of *svage*, i.e. 'the great heaven', for *Rūp.* and *Yerr.* read—sakiye pipule pi (*or* vipule) svage ārodheve (*or* ārādhetave), while other versions place *vipule* immediately after pakamamīṇena. Nowhere in the other edicts which speak of 'heaven,' is *vipule* used as an adj. of it, whereas later on in this edict, *vipule* (some versions vipulaṃ) is an adv. qualifying vaḍhisiti.

7. Supplied in some versions, kaṭe, sāvite, sāvāpite.

8. See pp. 24-27. Brahm. and Yerr. have 'my Borderers', aṃtā ca mai (*or* me) jāneyu (*or* °nevu).

9. Supplied in some versions, iyaṃ, iya.

10. The meaning of 1½ is not clear; has it reference to 'more than a year,' since when Aśoka became zealous in practising Dharma ?

11. The three Mysore versions begin—**Suvaṃṇagirīte ayaputasa mahāmātāṇaṃ ca vacanena Isilasi mahāmātā ārogiyaṃ vataviyā,** and Brahm. adds hevaṃ ca vataviyā—'From Suvarṇagiri (see p. 28), by the words (i.e. command) of the Āryaputra (see p. 14) and of the Mahāmātras (see p. 28), the Mahāmātras at Isila (see p. 28) are to be wished good health, (*Brahm.*) and are to be told thus.'

12. *Brahm.* Devāṇaṃpiye āṇapayati ; *Mask.* Devānaṃpiyasa Asokasa ; *Guj.* Devānaṃpiyasa Piyadasino Asoka-rājasa. See p. 13.

13. Some versions, adhikāni, sādhi°.

14. *Rūp.* pākās..ke, which is explained by some as = prakāśa-Śākya, 'an open or avowed Śākya (i.e. Buddhist)' but it may be engraver's error for upāsake. *Mask.* Budhaśake ; is it engraver's error for Budhupāsake = Buddhopāsaka ? and not = Buddha-Śākya, a tautology.

15. *Brahm.* and *Śidd.*—No tu kho bāḍhaṃ prakaṃte (*or* pak°) husaṃ ekaṃ savacharaṃ, 'But I was not very zealous indeed, for one year.' *Yerr.* has the same without 'very'.

16. Some versions have upayāte, °yite, °yīte, °gate.

17. *Mask.* uṭh...(= utthānaṃ ? see p. 34) mi (*read* me) upagate.

18. *Brahm.* and *Śidd.* Kāmaṃ tu kho khudakena, 'If he so desired, (even) by a small person' etc.

19. *Mask.* Iy.. aṭhe khudakena pi dhaṃma-yutena sake adhigatave. Na hevaṃ dakhitaviye uḍālake va im.. adhigacheyā ti. Khudake ca

uḍālake ca vataviyā : hevaṃ ve kalaṃtaṃ bhadake..se a...tike ca..., 'This end can be attained even by a small person if he is devoted to Dharma. It is not to be so considered that 'only the great will attain this'. The small and the great are to be told : 'By your devotedly acting thus...'.

20. *Śidd.* and *Yerr.* Yathā (*or* yatha) khudakā ca mahātpā (*or* mahādhanā) ca imaṃ pakameyu (*or* parākamevū), 'So that the small and the great may be zealous in this'.

21. *Rūp.* vaḍhi vaḍhisiti, 'will much increase'.

22. *Sahas.* diyaḍhiyaṃ, avaladhiyenā (=avarārdheṇa, 'at least') diyaḍhiyaṃ vaḍhisati ; some versions—apaladhiyenā (*or* avaradhiyā, apara°) vaḍhisiti.

After the above, some versions have 'postscript' matters (see p. 8), viz. *Rūp.* **Iya ca aṭhe pavatisu lekhāpeta vālat..** (read **vālate**=vārataḥ) ; **h...dha ca athi silā-ṭhaṃbhe, silā-ṭhaṃbhasi likhāpetavay.. ti ; etinā ca vayajanenā** (=vyañjanena) **yāvatak.. tupak.. ahāle** (=āhāraḥ) **savara** (read **savata**) **vivasetavāy..** (read **vivāsetaviye,** from vi√vas) **ti,** 'And cause this matter to be engraved on rocks, if convenient ; and if stone-pillars are there, cause it to be engraved on the stone-pillars (see p. 20) ; and in these words (it is) to be despatched everywhere as far as your districts (extend)', for which, *Sahas.* has—Iṃaṃ ca aṭhaṃ pavatesu likhāpayāthā ; ya cā athi hetā silā-thaṃbhā, tata pi likhāpayatha ti.

Thereafter *Rūp.* continues **Vyuṭhena sāvane kaṭe 200 50 6 sata vivāsā ti,** for which, *Sahas.* has—iyaṃ ca savane vivuthena duve sapaṃnālātisatā vivuthā ti 200 50 6 ; *Brahm.* and *Yerr.*—iyaṃ ca sāvaṇe sāvāpite vyūthena (vyu°) 200 50 6, of which some words are legible in the damaged versions of Śidd. and Jaṭ-R. as well.

The meaning of this clause has not been satisfactorily settled inspite of much discussion. It is very likely that vyuṭha (vyūtha, vyu°, vivutha) and vivāsā are derivatives of *vi√vas,* and that 200 50 6 means 250+50+6 i.e. 256. The clause is usually taken to mean '(This) proclamation was issued by me on tour (*vi√vas*) (when) 256 (nights, lāti=rātri in the Sahas. version, i.e. 'days') had been spent on tour'. Several other edicts such as RE 14, LPI, NPI etc must have been issued while Aśoka was on tour but nowhere else does he reckon time in this manner, the usual mode of reckoning everywhere

else being in regnal years. Some think that 256 stands for some kind of an era reckoned from Buddha's nirvāṇa, while others say it represents the number of days in a year, except during the rains, when a Buddhist monk is supposed to move about from place to place, which Aśoka imitated by a grand tour of preaching the Dharma. The word *sata* in Rūp., if it means 'hundred', is redundant. *Duve sapaṃnā* etc of Sahas. is explained by some as *duve* (two) *sapaṃnā* (fifty-six, ṣaṭpañcāśat) *lāti* (nights) *satā* (hundred), but others think that *lāti* has nothing to do with 'night'; they explain *sapaṃnālāti* as = *sapaṃnāsa* (56) + *ati* (exceeded by) = *sapaṃnāsāti*, in which *sā* was erroneously engraved as *lā*; or as = *sapaṃnā* + *ati* = *sapaṃnā(y)ati* or °*(y)āti*, in which *yā* was written as *lā* either by mistake or as a dialectal variant though phonetically unsound; some again say that *sapaṃnā* + *ati* = *sapaṃnālāti* by the rule of Pali grammar which provides that *ya*, *va*, *la* etc should be placed between the final vowel of the preceding word and the initial vowel of the succeeding word if *sandhi* is to take place between these two vowels. In that case *duve......satā* would be nothing more than writing in words the number 256 expressed in figures as 200 50 6—just as '*two* peacocks and *one* deer' in RE 1, '*two* (kinds of) medical treatment' in RE 2, and 'every *five* years' in RE 3, at Shāhb. and Māṇs., and '*four* kings' in RE 13 at Kāl. are written first in words and then in figures. The various derivatives of *vi*√*vas* are explained by some as 'messengers sent' with copies of the Proclamation, by whom the edict was to be proclaimed far and wide, cf. *vivāsetaviye* above, at the beginning of the Rūp. version of this postscript, and *vivāsayātha* and *vivāsāpayāthā* at the end of the Sārnāth 'postscript' of SPE, where the words mean 'to publicise or proclaim by sending out (messengers)'. This much-discussed clause would then mean 'This proclamation is caused to be announced by messengers, (of whom) 256 were sent out'. Does the word *sata* of Rūp. *sata vivāsā* stand not for *śata* but for *saṃta* = *santaḥ*, 'are or have been (sent out)'? As for 256 which is = 16 × 16, or = 8 × 8 × 4, had it some reference to sending messengers to the 'eight' directions? Or was 8 considered to be a 'round' number (= 4 × 2) which was multiplied once by itself and then again by its half, referring to the increase of Dharma to 'one and a half times'?

Finally, the three Mysore versions (Śidd. and Jaṭ. R. much damaged) and Yerr. have some more 'postscript' matters, viz. Brahm.—

Se hevaṃ devāṇaṃpiye āha : mātāpitisu susūsitaviye, hemeva garusu ; prāṇesu drahyitavyaṃ (from √dṛṃh, lit. 'to be firm'), **sacaṃ vatayiyaṃ— se ime dhaṃma-guṇā pavatitaviyā ; hemeva aṃtevāsinā ācariye apacāyitaviye, ñātikesu ca kaṃ ya..rahaṃ** (*read* yathār⁰) **pavatitaviye ; esā porāṇā pakiti, dighāvuse ca esa ; hevaṃ esa kaṭiviye** (*read* kaṭav⁰). **Capaḍena likhite lipikareṇa** (this last word is written in Kharoṣṭhī, see p. 4-5)—'Now, the Beloved of the gods spoke thus : Respect is to be shown to mother and father, likewise to elders ; mercy is to be shown to living beings, truth is to be spoken—these Dharma qualities are to be practised ; likewise deference is to be shown by the pupil to the teacher, and one must behave in proper manner towards relatives ; this is the ancient tradition, and it has been of long life ; thus is it to be practised. Written by Capaḍa, the engraver' ; for which Yerr. writes very clumsily with many errors and repetitions (see p. 6)—Hevaṃ devānaṃpiyena : yathā devānaṃpiyena savatha kathitā tathā kaṭaviy... rājuke (=Rajjuka, *see p. 29*) ānāpitaviye, bherinā jānapadaṃ ānapayisati raṭhikān...(=Rāṣṭrikān, *see p. 29*) ca—mātā-pitūsu sususitaviye, hemeva garūsu sususitaviye, prānesu dayitaviye, sac... vataviy... susuma (? *read* se ime) dhaṃma-gunā pavatitaviyā—hevaṃ tuphe ānapayātha devānaṃpiyasa vacanena ; hevaṃ dāni hi yathā hathiyārohāni (elephant-drivers), kāranakāni (*see p. 28*) yūgyacariyāni (chariot-drivers ?) baṃbhanāni ca nivesayātha (*ni√viś, to instruct*) atha aṃtevāsīni yārisa porānā pakiti iyaṃ sususitaviye ; apacāyanā y...vā ācariyasa savā me...yasa yathācariṇ... ācariyasa nātikāni yathārahaṃ nātikesu pavatitaviye ; hesā pi aṃtevāsīsu yathārahaṃ pavatitaviye yārisā porānā pakiti yathārah... yathā iyaṃ ārokaṃ (*see below*) siyā ; hevaṃ tuphe ānapayātha nivesayātha ca aṃtevāsīni ; hevaṃ devānaṃpiye ānapayati.

Ārokaṃ is usually taken as=ārogyaṃ, 'healthy, strong', or as= *aroka*, 'flawless, free from defects, perfect', (*rokaḥ*, 'a hole'). It may also be='bright, resplendent', from *ā√ruc*, 'to shine (through)'. Some would read the word as *tireke=atireka*, 'excelling'.

The employment of elephant-drivers, chariot-drivers (?), Brahmans and their pupils, in addition to state-officials down to the lowest grade, shows what intensive measures were adopted by Aśoka to propagate his message to the widest extent.

THREE BARĀBAR CAVE INSCRIPTIONS

These three inscriptions are found in different caves of the Barābar hill in Bihar, 15 miles north of Gaya and 8 miles from Bela station on the Patna-Gaya rail-line. Another cave here, known as the Lomaśa-ṛṣi cave, contains a Vaiṣṇava inscription of Maukhari Anantavarman (c. 7th cent.), which names this hill as Pravara-giri, and Pravara>Paravara>Barabara>Barābar. BCIs 2 and 3 name this hill as Khalatika i.e. 'Bald (or shaven)-headed'. This hill was also known as Goratha-giri. Not far from Barābar is the Nāgārjunī hill with three more caves donated to the Ājīvikas by Daśaratha, a grandson of Aśoka. For the Ājīvikas, see p. 29, and for Aśoka's alleged relations with them, see p. 15. It is to be noticed that Aśoka's donation to the Ājīvikas, to whom the Buddhists were very hostile, took place in the 12th regnal year when he was probably already a staunch follower of Buddhism.

In three out of the six caves donated to the Ājīvikas by Aśoka and Daśaratha, attempt was made to chisel away the words '(given) to the Ājīvikas' occurring in the inscriptions, probably by Khāravela of Kaliṅga who, a staunch Jaina and therefore hostile to the Ājīvikas, invaded this region twice during the 2nd cent. B.C., and not by Maukhari Anantavarman who assigned one of the Barābar caves to Kṛṣṇa and two of the Nāgārjunī caves to Śiva and Pārvatī, and in whose time the Aśokan script was no longer understood.

BCI 3 was possibly caused to be engraved not by Aśoka himself but by an anonymous donor, for in all his inscriptions Aśoka says in direct manner 'When *I* was crowned so many years' or 'By *me* (or by King Priyadarśin, the Beloved of the gods), crowned so many years' and never indirectly in the nominative absolute as '(When) King Priyadarśin (was) crowned nineteen years' as in BCI 3. The real donor might probably have been Aśokas mother, or one of his queens (see p. 31-33), or one of his sons, or grandsons (Daśaratha might have already attained majority at the time).

For the omission of Aśoka's title 'Beloved of the gods' in these inscriptions, see p. 12.

THREE BARĀBAR CAVE INSCRIPTIONS

1

Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B. C.*

This Banyan-cave[1] was given to the Ājīvikas by King Priyadarśin, crowned twelve years.

2

Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B.C.*

This cave in the Khalatika hill was given to the Ājīvikas by King Priyadarśin, crowned twelve years.

3

Date : *Regnal year 19 = c. 250 B.C.*

When King Priyadarśin was crowned nineteen years, this cave in the very pleasant Khalatika hill was given by me to the Ājīvikas, for the sake of (shelter from) the approach of the roar of waters[2].

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1. So called no doubt from a banyan tree close to it, cf. the names of the Pippalī and the Saptaparṇī caves of Rājagṛha. The inscriptions of Daśaratha also give different names to the three Nāgārjunī hill caves.
2. I. e. rain-water.

1

Lājinā Piyadasinā duvāḍasa-vasābhisitenā iyaṃ nigoha-kubhā dinā Ājīvikehi.

2

Lājinā Piyadasinā duvāḍasa-vasābhisitenā iyaṃ kubhā Khalatika-pavatasi dinā Ājīvikehi.

3

Lāja Piyadasī ekunavīsati-vasābhisite jala-ghosāgamathāta me iyaṃ khubhā supiye Khalatika-pavatasi dinā Ājīvikehi.

TEXTS SANSKRITIZED

1

Rājñā Priyadarśinā dvādaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena iyaṃ nyagrodha-guhā dattā Ājīvikebhyaḥ.

2

Rājñā Priyadarśinā dvādaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena iyaṃ guhā Khalatika-parvate dattā Ājīvikebhyaḥ.

3

Rājā Priyadarśī ekonaviṃśati-varṣābhisktaḥ (=Rājñi °darśini °bhiṣikte sati) jala-ghoṣāgamārthātaḥ mayā iyaṃ guhā supriye Khalatika-parvate dattā Ājīvikebhyaḥ.

FOURTEEN ROCK EDICTS

These inscriptions are found in the following places :

North India

Kālsī—REs 1-14. The rock lies about 1½ miles N. of Kālsī, a town in the Chakrata *tahsil* of Dehra Dun Dist. of Uttar Pradesh, about 15 miles W. of Mussouri. On the right-hand side of the rock is found traced the outlines of an elephant (see p. 48) with the inscription *gajatame*, 'the best elephant,' a symbol of Buddha, which may be of a later date.

North-West Frontier

Mānsehrā—REs 1-14. Mānsehrā is the headquarters of a *tahsil* of the Hazara Dist.

Shāhbāzgarhī—REs 1-14. Shāhbāzgarhī is 9 miles from Mardan, the headquarters of the Yusufzai sub-division of the Peshawar Dist.

West India

Girnār (<Giri-nagara)—REs 1-14. Girnār is about a mile E. of Junāgarh (junā<jūrṇa=jīrṇa) in Kathiawar. Besides the Aśokan edicts, this rock bears two other inscriptions of great value, viz. (i) of the Mahākṣatrapa Rudradāman of the 2nd century A.D., recording the restoration of the lake Sudarśana which had been 'originally constructed by the Vaiśya Puṣyagupta, the provincial governor (rāṣṭrika) of the Maurya king Candragupta and subsequently adorned with conduits by the Yavana king Tushāspha for Aśoka, the Maurya'; (ii) an inscription recording further repairs to the lake Sudarśana, carried out by Cakrapālita, son of Parṇadatta, who was governor of Surāṣṭra, in 456-57 A.D. during the reign of the Gupta king Skandagupta.

The outline of an elephant was probably cut by the side of the inscriptions, which however was destroyed when the rock was blasted with gunpowder for road-making. Below RE 13 were inscribed some words, parts of which are destroyed but what survives is *(sa)rva-sveto*

hasti sarva-loka-sukhāharo nāma, 'the all-white elephant, the bringer of happiness to all the worlds.'

Sopārā (<Sūrpāraka)—in the Bassein *taluka* of Thana Dist., Bombay. Only a fragment of RE 8 was found here, now preserved in the museum of the Bombay Asiatic Society, wherefrom it is called by some as the Bombay-Sopārā edict. The other inscriptions too of the RE series must have been engraved here but are now destroyed. A fragment of RE 9, recently discovered (January 1956) in the village of Bhuigam, 3 miles from Sopārā, probably belonged to the same series.

South India

Yerrāguḍi—See p. 51. REs 1-14.

South-East India

Dhaulī (<*Tosalī* ?)—REs 1-10 and 14. Dhaulī is in the Khurda sub-division of Puri Dist. of Orissa, about 7 miles S. of Bhuvaneswar. REs 11-13 were not inscribed here, probably because of the reference in RE 13 to the Kaliṅga war, of which Aśoka did not want to remind the Kaliṅgs; but as RE 13 was despatched not alone but together with REs 11-12 (see p. 19), in omitting RE 13, the entire set REs 11-13 came to be omitted in Kaliṅga.

Above the inscriptions is a terrace, 16 ft. × 14 ft., on the right side of which, as one faces the inscriptions, is hewn out of the rock, the fore-half of an elephant of superior workmanship (see p. 41). Below RE 6 is found inscribed the word *seto*, 'the white (elephant)'.

Jaugaḍa—REs 1-10 and 14. Jaugaḍa is a ruined fort in the Berhampur *taluka* of Ganjam Dist. of Orissa, about 18 miles NW. of Ganjam town. Here too REs 11-13 were not engraved, for the same reason as in Dhaulī.

ROCK EDICT I

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B.C.*
Subject : *Prohibition of animal sacrifice for religious purposes and prohibition of samāja festive gatherings*

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin.

Here (in my dominion) no living beings are to be killed and offered in sacrifice.

And no festive gatherings[1] are to be held. The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin sees much evil in festive gatherings. But there are festive gatherings of some kinds too, which are approved by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin.

Formerly, in the kitchen of the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, many hundred thousands[2] of animals were killed everyday for the sake of curry. But now when this Dharma-rescript is written, only three animals are being killed (everyday) for the sake of curry, (viz.) two peacocks (and) one deer[3], (and) the deer again, not always. Even these three animals shall not be killed in future.

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1. Samāja, Pali samajja, survives in large *melas* of the present day. Racing, wrestling, gambling, singing, dancing, music, jugglery, acrobatics etc took place in these gatherings which lasted for weeks when meat-eating, drinking and other laxities were indulged in, why Aśoka forbade them. But he makes it clear that he permitted harmless samājas. See p. 11.
2. This number is of course to be taken figuratively.
3. In Pali, *mora* means also fowls, and *mṛga* also quadrupeds, in general. But perhaps actually the peacock and the deer were meant

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 1

Iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipī [4]devānaṃpriyena Priyadasinā rāñā lekhāpitā. Idha na kiṃci jīvaṃ ārabhitpā prajūhitavyaṃ. Na ca samājo katavyo. Bahukaṃ hi dosaṃ samājamhi pasati devānaṃpriyo Priyadasi rājā. Asti pi tu ekacā samājā sādhu-matā devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño. Purā mahānasamhi devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño anudivasaṃ bahūni prāṇa-sata-sahasrāni ārabhisu sūpāthāya. Se aja yadā ayaṃ dhaṃma-lipī likhitā, tī eva prāṇā ārabhare sūpāthāya—dvo morā, eko mago, so pi mago na dhruvo. Ete pi trī prāṇā pachā na ārabhisare.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā lekhitā. Iha na kaścit jīvaḥ ālabhya prahotavyaḥ. Na ca samājaḥ kartavyaḥ. Bahukaṃ hi doṣaṃ samāje paśyati devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā. Santi api tu eke samājāḥ sādhu-matāḥ devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ. Purā mahānase devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ anudivasaṃ bahūni prāṇa-śata-sahasrāṇi ālabhyanta sūpārthāya. Tat adya yadā iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ likhitā, trayaḥ eva prāṇāḥ ālabhyante sūpārthāya—dvau mayūrau, ekaḥ mṛgaḥ, saḥ api mṛgaḥ na dhruvaḥ. Ete api trayaḥ prāṇāḥ paścāt na ālapsyante.

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here. It is supposed that the killing of these was continued because Aśoka was very fond of these two kinds of meat, or for other members of the royal household. The choice of these two particular animals was determined perhaps by the fact that the peacock and the deer are respectively the largest of fowls and quadrupeds ; cf. the *hasti-tāpasas* who killed one elephant a year, to obtain the maximum quantity of meat by killing the minimum number of lives.

4. Jaug. *Khepiṃgalasi pavatasi dev⁰*, 'on the Khepiṅgala (=which looks brown in the sky) rock'.

ROCK EDICT 2

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B.C.*
Subject : *Provision of medical treatment, shade and water for men and animals throughout his dominion and also in the neighbouring countries*

Everywhere in the dominion of the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, and likewise among (his) Borderers, such as the Colas[1], the Pāṇḍyas, Satiyaputra, Keralaputra, upto Tāmraparṇī, the Yona king Antiyaka, and also those kings who are the neighbours of that Antiyaka—everywhere (provision) has been made by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, (for) two (kinds of) medical treatment, (viz.) medical treatment for men and medical treatment for animals.

And wherever there are no (medicinal) herbs that are suitable for men and suitable for animals, everywhere (such) have been caused to be brought and caused to be planted.

And wherever there are no (medicinal) roots and fruits, everywhere (such) have been caused to be brought and caused to be planted.

And on the roads, wells have been caused to be dug and trees have been caused to be planted, for the use of animals and men.

1. For these peoples, countries and foreign kings (their dominions being meant), see p. 24-27.

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 2

Sarvata vijitamhi devānampriyasa Piyadasino rāño, evamapi[2] pracaṃtesu yathā Coḍā Pāḍā Satiyaputo Ketalaputo (*read* **Kerala**°), **ā Taṃbapaṃṇī, Aṃtiyako Yona-rājā, ye vā pi[3] tasa Aṃtiyakasa sāmīpa.. rājāno—sarvatra devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño dve cikīcha katā, manusa-cikīchā ca, pasu-cikīchā ca. Osuḍhāni ca yāni manusopagāni ca pasopagāni ca yata yata nāsti, sarvatrā hārāpitāni ca ropāpitāni ca. Mūlāni ca phalāni ca yata yatra nāsti, sarvata hārāpitāni ca ropāpitāni ca. Paṃthesū kūpā ca khānāpitā, vrachā ca ropāpitā, paribhogāya[4] pasu-manusānaṃ.**

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Sarvatra vijite devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ, evamapi pratyanteṣu yathā Colāḥ Pāṇḍyāḥ Satiyaputraḥ Keralaputraḥ, ā-Tāmraparṇi, Antiyakaḥ Yona-rājaḥ, ye vā api tasya Antiyakasya sāmīpāḥ rājānaḥ—sarvatra devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ dve cikitse kṛte, manuṣya-cikitsā ca, paśu-cikitsā ca. Auṣadhāni ca yāni manuṣyopagāni ca paśūpagāni ca yatra yatra na santi, sarvatra hāritāni ca ropitāni ca. Mūlāni ca phalāni ca yatra yatra na santi, sarvatra hāritāni ca ropitāni ca. Pathiṣu kūpāḥ ca khānitāḥ, vṛkṣāḥ ca ropitāḥ, paribhogāya paśu-manuṣyāṇām.

2. Some versions *ye ca* or *e vā pi*; for *pracaṃtesu*, other versions *aṃtā*, °*ta*, *ata*; for Pāḍā, other versions Paṃḍiyā, °ya.

3. Kāl. *ye cā aṃne*; for *sāmīp*°, Kāl., Jau. *sāmaṃtā*; for *cikīchā*, Kāl. *cikisakā*, 'physicians'.

4. Kāl. *paṭibhogāye*.

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B.C.*
Subject : *Institution of quinquennial tours of officials for the propagation of Dharma instructions*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :
This has been ordered by me, (when) crowned twelve years—

Everywhere in my dominion, the Yuktas[1], the Rajjukas and the Prādeśikas shall go out on tour every five years for this special purpose, (viz.) for these Dharma instructions—as also for other business—

Commendable is respectfulness towards mother and father; gifts to friends, acquaintances, relatives, (and) to Brāhmaṇas and ascetics are commendable; non-killing of animals is commendable; moderation in spending (and) moderation in (owning) possessions are commendable.

The Council (of Mahāmātras) too shall order the Yuktas to register (these rules together) with the purpose (thereof) and in these (very) words[2].

1. For these officials, see p. 28 ; for the Brahmans and ascetics, p. 29.
2. The exact meaning of this clause is not clear ; other meanings suggested for *gaṇanā* are 'to formulate, or to estimate (the expenses for the tours).' For *vyañjana,* cf. p. 55., note 22.

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 3

Devānampiyo Piyadasi rājā evaṃ āha[3]: dbādasa-vāsābhisitena mayā idaṃ āñapitaṃ—sarvata vijite mama yutā ca, rājūke ca, prādesike ca paṃcasu paṃcasu vāsesu anusaṃyānaṃ niyātu etāyeva athāya—imāya dhaṃmānusasṭiya, yathā aññāya pi kaṃmāya—sādhu mātari ca pitari ca susrūsā; mitra-saṃstuta-ñātīnaṃ bāmhaṇa-samaṇānaṃ sādhu dānaṃ; prāṇānaṃ sādhu anāraṃbho; apa-vyayatā apa-bhāḍatā sādhu. Parisā pi yute āñapayisati gaṇanāyaṃ hetuto ca vyaṃjanato ca.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: dvādaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā idam ājñaptaṃ—sarvatra vijite mama yuktāḥ ca, rajjukāḥ ca, prādeśikāḥ ca pañcasu pañcasu varṣeṣu anusaṃyānāya niryāntu etasmāyeva arthāya—asyai dharmānuśastaye, yathā anyasmai api karmaṇe—sādhuḥ mātari ca pitari ca śuśrūṣā; mitra-saṃstuta-jñātibhyaḥ brāhmaṇa-śramaṇebhyaḥ sādhu dānaṃ; prāṇānāṃ sādhuḥ anālambhaḥ; alpa-vyayatā alpa-bhāṇḍatā sādhū. Pariṣat api yuktān ājñāpayiṣyati gaṇanāyāṃ hetutaḥ ca vyañjanataḥ ca.

3. Here as well as in the preambles to REs 5, 6, 9 and 11, Shāhb. has *ahati* or *evaṃ ah°*; see p. 10.

ROCK EDICT 4

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 12 = c. 257 B.C.*
Subject : *Success attained by his propagation of the Dharma is greater than that obtained by conventional methods*

In times past, for many hundreds of years, ever increased the killing of animals and the hurting of living beings, improper behaviour towards relatives, (and) improper behaviour towards Brāhmaṇas and ascetics. But now, by the Dharma practices of the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, the sound of the drum has become the sound of Dharma[1].

Such as did not take place before for many hundreds of years by representations of (celestial) mansions, representations of elephants, and by showing the people fire-bodies and other heavenly sights, have now been promoted by the Dharma instructions of the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, the non-killing of animals, non-hurting of living beings, proper behaviour towards relatives, proper behaviour towards Brāhmaṇas and ascetics, respectfulness towards mother (and) father, (and) respectfulness towards the aged.

These and many other kinds of Dharma practices have increased, and the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, will ever (continue to) promote this practice of the Dharma.

And the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, will yet more promote this practice of the Dharma till the end of the world, (and) abiding in Dharma (and) in good conduct, will instruct the Dharma.

This indeed is the best work, viz. to instruct the Dharma.

GIRNAR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 4

Atikātaṃ aṃtaraṃ bahūni vāsa-satāni vaḍhito eva prāṇāraṃbho, vihiṃsā ca bhūtānaṃ, ñātīsu asaṃpratipatī, brāmhaṇa-sramaṇānaṃ asaṃpratīpatī. Ta aja devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño dhaṃma-caraṇena bherī-ghoso aho dhaṃma-ghoso. Vimāna-darsaṇā ca, hasti-dasaṇā ca, agi-khaṃdhāni ca, aññāni ca divyāni rūpāni dasayitpā janaṃ yārise bahūhi vāsa-satehi na bhūta-puve, tārise aja vaḍhite devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño dhaṃmānusasṭiyā anāraṃbho prāṇānaṃ, avihīsā bhūtānaṃ, ñātīnaṃ saṃpaṭipatī, bramhaṇa-samaṇānaṃ saṃpaṭipatī, mātari pitari susrusā, thaira-susrusā. Esa añe ca bahu-vidhe dhaṃma-caraṇe vaḍhite, vaḍhayisati ceva devānaṃpriyo Priyadasi rājā dhaṃma-caraṇaṃ idaṃ. Putrā ca, potrā ca, prapotrā ca devānaṃpriyasa Priyadasino rāño pravadhayisaṃti idaṃ dhaṃma-caraṇaṃ āva savaṭa-kapā, dhaṃmamhi sīlamhi tisṭaṃto dhaṃmaṃ anusāsisaṃti. Esa hi sesṭe kaṃme

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Atikrāntam antaraṃ bahūni varṣa-śatāni vardhitaḥ eva prāṇālambhaḥ, vihiṃsā ca bhūtānāṃ, jñātiṣu asampratipattiḥ, brāhmaṇa-śramaṇānām asampratipattiḥ. Tat adya devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ dharma-caraṇena bherī-ghoṣaḥ abhavat dharma-ghoṣaḥ. Vimāna-darśanāt ca, hasti-darśanāt ca, agni-skandhān ca, anyāni ca divyāni rūpāṇi darśayitvā janaṃ yādṛśaṃ bahubhiḥ varṣa-śataiḥ na bhūta-pūrvaṃ, tādṛśam adya vardhitaṃ devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ dharmānuśastyā anālambhaḥ prāṇānām, avihiṃsā bhūtānāṃ, jñātīnāṃ sampratipattiḥ, brāhmaṇa-śramaṇānāṃ sampratipattiḥ, mātari pitari śuśrūṣā, sthavira-śuśrūṣā. Etat anyat ca bahu-vidhaṃ dharma-caraṇaṃ vardhitaṃ, vardhayiṣyati caiva devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā dharma-caraṇam idam. Putrāḥ ca, pautrāḥ ca, prapautrāḥ ca devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ pravardhayiṣyanti idaṃ dharma-caraṇaṃ yāvat saṃvarta-kalpaṃ, dharme śīle tiṣṭhantaḥ dharmam anuśāsiṣyanti. Etat hi śreṣṭhaṃ karma

But the practice of Dharma is not (possible) for one who is devoid of good conduct. Therefore the promotion and the non-diminishment of this object is commendable.

For this purpose has this been caused to be written that they (my descendants) may devote themselves to the promotion of this object and that (its) diminishment may not please (them).

This has been caused to be written by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, crowned twelve years.

1. The drum here refers more probably to the music of customary religious festivities than to the war-drum. This edict has no reference to a context of war and occupies itself wholly with matters of moral behaviour. What Aśoka means to say is probably that his instructions have been more effective in making people practise the Dharma than were the traditional religious festivities. The clauses on *vimāna* etc are construed by some as meaning that it was Aśoka who instituted these shows and claimed the success thereof in promoting Dharma, but probably that is not the correct construction. For a rational mind such as Aśoka's, to think of promoting Dharma,

ya dhaṃmānusāsanaṃ. Dhaṃma-caraṇe pi na bhavati asīlasa. Ta imamhi athamhi vadhī ca, ahīnī ca sādhu. Etāya athāya idaṃ lekhāpitaṃ[2]—imasa athasa vadhi yujaṃtu, hīni ca no locetavyā[3]. Dbādasa-vāsābhisitena devānaṃpriyena Priyadasinā rāñā idaṃ lekhāpitaṃ.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

yat dharmānuśāsanam. Dharma-caraṇam api na bhavati aśīlasya. Tat asmin arthe vṛddhiḥ ca ahīniḥ ca sādhuḥ. Etasmai arthāya idaṃ lekhitam—asya arthasya vṛddhiḥ yujyatāṃ, hīniḥ ca no rocayitavyā. Dvādaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā idaṃ lekhitam.

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as he conceived it, by means of those edifying scenes is hardly likely. It is not clear what the scenes actually stood for. The celestial mansions might be the abodes of the gods; the elephant, the *vāhana* of Indra; the fire-bodies (Shāhb. *joti-kaṃdhani*), different kinds of fire-works;—representations whereof were probably carried in procession or otherwise publicly exhibited.

2. Shāhb. *nipistaṃ*, and at the end of the edict, *nipesitaṃ*; see p. 9.
3. Three versions *alocayisu*, *°sū*, from *ā√loc*, 'to think of'.

Kālsī version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Appointment of the Dharma-Mahāmātras, and their activities*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, said :

Good deeds are difficult to perform. He who is the first to perform a good deed, accomplishes something difficult.

Now, many good deeds have been performed by me. Likewise, my sons and grandsons and after them those descendants of mine till the end of the world, who will act in like manner, will do a good deed. But he who will neglect even a part of it, will do a bad deed. Sin is quite easy indeed to commit.

Now, in times past, (officers) called Dharma-Mahāmātras did not exist. Dharma-Mahāmātras have (now) been appointed by me, (when I am) crowned thirteen years.

They are occupied among all sects for the establishment of the Dharma and for the promotion of Dharma, or for the welfare and happiness of those who are devoted to Dharma.

They are occupied among the wage-earners (?), the Brāhmaṇas, the well-to-do[1], the destitutes (and) the aged, of the Yonas, the Kambojas, the Gandhāras,[2] and of (my) other western Borderers, for (their) welfare and happiness, for (their) devotion to Dharma (and) for (their) freedom from hindrances[3].

They are occupied with the maintenance, the unfettering, and the realease of prisoners (on these grounds) viz. 'this one has descendants to support', or 'this one has been bewitched[4]', or 'this one is old.'

In the female apartments of my brothers and sisters, here and in all the towns in the provinces, as also among (my) other relatives, everywhere are (they) occupied.

KĀLSĪ TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 5

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā ahā : kayāne dukale. E ādikale kayānasā, se dukalaṃ kaleti. Se mamayā bahu kayāne kaṭe. Tā mamā putā cā natāle cā, palaṃ cā tehi ye apatiye me āva kapaṃ tathā anuvaṭisaṃti, se sukaṭaṃ kachaṃti. E cu hetā desaṃ pi hāpayisati, se dukaṭaṃ kachati. Pāpe hi nāmā supadālaye[5]. Se atikaṃtaṃ aṃtalaṃ no huta-puluva dhaṃma-mahāmatā nāmā. Tedasa-vasābhisitenā mamayā dhaṃma-mahāmātā kaṭā. Te sava-pāsaṃḍesu viyāpaṭā dhaṃmādhithānāye cā, dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā hida-sukhāye vā dhaṃma-yutasā. Yona-Kaṃboja-Gaṃdhālānaṃ, e vā pi aṃne apalaṃtā, bhaṭamayesu[6] baṃbhanibhesu anathesu vudhesu hida-sukhāye dhaṃma-yutāye apalibodhāye viyapaṭā te. Baṃdhana-badhasā paṭividhānāye apalibodhāye mokhāye cā—eyaṃ anubadhā-pajāva ti vā, kaṭābhikāle ti vā, mahālake ti vā, viyāpaṭā te. Hidā[7] bāhilesu cā nagalesu savesu olodhanesu bhātinaṃ ca ne[8] bhagininā, e vā pi

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā āha : kalyāṇaṃ duṣkaram. Yaḥ ādikaraḥ kalyāṇasya, saḥ duṣkaraṃ karoti. Tat mayā bahu kalyāṇaṃ kṛtam. Tat mama putrāḥ ca naptāraḥ ca, paraṃ ca tebhyaḥ yat apatyaṃ me yāvat kalpaṃ tathā anuvartiṣyante, te sukṛtaṃ kariṣyanti. Yaḥ tu atra deśam api hāsyati, saḥ duṣkṛtaṃ kariṣyati. Pāpaṃ hi nāma supradāryam(?). Tat atikrāntam antaraṃ no bhūta-pūrvāḥ dharma-mahāmātrāḥ nāma. Trayodaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā dharma-mahāmātrāḥ kṛtāḥ. Te sarva-pārṣadeṣu vyāpṛtāḥ dharmādhiṣṭhānāya ca, dharma-vṛddhaye hita-sukhāya vā dharma-yuktasya. Yona-Kamboja-Gandhārāṇāṃ, ye vā api anye aparāntāḥ (teṣāṃ) bhṛta-maryeṣu (?) brāhmaṇebhyeṣu anātheṣu vṛddheṣu hita-sukhāya dharma-yuktāya aparibodhāya vyāpṛtāḥ te. Bandhana-baddhasya pratividhānāya aparibodhāya mokṣāya ca—ayam anubaddha-prajāvān iti vā, kṛtābhikāraḥ iti vā, mahallakaḥ iti vā, vyāpṛtāḥ te. Iha bahiḥ ca nagareṣu sarveṣu avarodhaneṣu bhrātṛṇāṃ ca me (?) bhaginīnāṃ, ye vā api

Everywhere in my dominion are these Dharma-Mahāmātras occupied (thus) among those who are devoted to Dharma, viz. 'this one is firmly attached to Dharma'[9], or 'this one gives gifts'.

For this purpose has this Dharma-rescript been caused to be written that it may be long enduring and that my descendants may act in conformity with it.

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1. *Ibhya* might mean 'kṣatriya' as well.
2. Other versions add the Rāṣṭrikas (risṭika, raṭhika, laṭh°) and the Petenikas (piten°, pitin°) ; see p. 27.
3. *Paribodha*, lit. 'fetters' ; some versions *parigodha*.
4. The exact meaning of *kṛtābhikāra* is not clear, 'suffering from mental derangement or an incurable disease' ?
5. Māns. *supadarave* ; derivation not known ; some suggest *su-pra* √*dṛ* (to respect to honour). Some versions *sukaraṃ* which explains the meaning clearly.

aṃne nātikye, savatā viyāpaṭā. E iyaṃ dhaṃma-nisite ti vā, dāna-suyute ti vā, savatā vijitasi mamā dhaṃma-yutasi viyāpaṭā te dhaṃma-mahāmatā. Etāye aṭhāye iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi lekhitā cila-thitikyā hotu, tathā ca me pajā anuvatatu.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

anye jñātikāḥ (teṣu ca), sarvatra vyāpṛtāḥ. Yaḥ ayaṃ dharma-niśritaḥ iti vā, dāna-saṃyuktaḥ iti vā, sarvatra vijite mama dharma-yukteṣu vyāpṛtāḥ te dharma-mahāmātrāḥ. Etasmai arthāya iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā cira-sthitikā bhavatu, tathā ca me prajāḥ anuvartantām.

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6. Some versions *bhatam°*, *bhaṭim°*, exact meaning unknown, explained by some as = *bhṛta-m-āryeṣu*, 'among servants and masters,' or 'śūdras (*bhṛta*) and vaiśyas (*arya*)'.

7. Gir. *Pāṭaliputε*', see p. 28. Dhau. 'In all my female apartments, here and in all the towns outside, as also in those of my brothers or sisters, or among (my) other relations, everywhere etc.'

8. This may be the engraver's error for *me* as in Dhau. and Shāhb., or = *naḥ* (?), 'our' (it is unusual for Aśoka to speak of himself in the pl. no.), or = '(of) those (brothers and sisters of mine).'

9. Some versions add 'or this one is established in Dharma,' Dhau. *dhaṃmādhithāne ti va.*

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka's tireless zeal in serving the interests of the public*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

In times past did not take place at all times the disposal of (public) affairs (by the king) or the submission of reports (to him). Now by me, this has been ordered—

At all times, (whether) I am eating, (or I am) in the female apartments, (or) in the bed-chamber, or in the chariot[1], or in the palanquin, or in the parks, everywhere Reporters[2] have been posted (with the instruction)—'Report to me the affairs of the people', and everywhere I dispose of the affairs of the people.

And whatever I myself orally[3] order the Almoner or the Herald, or again, whatever emergent[4] matter is delegated to the Mahāmātras—if in respect of those matters, opposition or debate arises in the Council (of Mahāmātras), (such) is to be reported immediately to me everywhere (and) at all times—thus has been ordered by me.

I am never content with exerting (myself) or with the dispatch of business. The welfare of all the people is considered by me as (my) duty indeed. And the root of that again (is) this, (viz.) exertion and dispatch of business.

There is indeed no better work than the welfare of all the people. And whatever efforts I am making are in order that I may discharge (my) debts to (all) beings, that I may make them happy here (in this life) and that they may attain heaven in the next (life).

Therefore, for this purpose has this Dharma-rescript been caused to be written that it may endure long, and

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 6

(*Kālsī*—Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi) rājā evaṃ āha : atikrātaṃ aṃtaraṃ na bhūta-pruva (*Kālsī*—savaṃ kalaṃ) atha-kaṃme va paṭivedanā vā. Ta mayā evaṃ kataṃ—save kāle, bhuṃjamānasa me, orodhanamhi gabhāgāramhi vacamhi va, vinītamhi ca, uyānesu ca savatra paṭivedakā sṭitā—athe me janasa paṭivedetha iti, sarvatra ca janasa athe karomi. Ya ca kiṃci mukhato āñapayāmi svayaṃ dāpakaṃ vā, srāvāpakaṃ vā, ya vā puna mahāmātresu ācāyike aropitaṃ bhavati, tāya athāya vivādo nijhatī[5] va saṃto parisāyaṃ, ānaṃtaraṃ paṭivedetavyaṃ me sarvatra sarve kāle—evaṃ mayā āñapitaṃ. Nāsti hi me toso usṭānamhi atha-saṃtīraṇāya va. Katavya-mate hi me sarva-loka-hitaṃ. Tasa ca puna esa mūle—usṭānaṃ ca, atha-saṃtīraṇā ca. Nāsti hi kaṃmataraṃ sarva-loka-hitatpā. Ya ca kiṃci parākramāmi ahaṃ kiṃti bhūtānaṃ ānaṃṇaṃ gacheyaṃ, idha ca nāni sukhāpayāmi, paratrā ca svagaṃ ārādhayaṃtu. Ta etāya athāya ayaṃ dhaṃma-lipī lekhāpitā kiṃti ciraṃ tisṭeya iti,

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: atikrāntam antaraṃ na bhūta-pūrvaṃ sarvasmin kāle artha-karma vā prativedanā vā. Tat mayā evaṃ kṛtaṃ—sarvasmin kāle, bhuñjāne mayi, avarodhane garbhāgāre vraje vā, vainītake ca, udyāneṣu ca sarvatra prativedakāḥ sthāpitāḥ—arthaṃ me janasya prativedayata iti, sarvatra ca janasya arthaṃ karomi. Yat ca kiñcit mukhataḥ ājñāpayāmi svayaṃ dāpakaṃ vā, śrāvakaṃ vā, yat vā punaḥ mahāmātreṣu ātyayikam āropitaṃ bhavati, tasmai arthāya vivāde nidhyātyāṃ vā sati pariṣadi, anantaraṃ prativedayitavyaṃ me sarvatra sarvasmin kāle—evaṃ mayā ājñaptam. Nāsti hi me toṣaḥ utthāne artha-santīraṇāyāṃ vā. Kartavya-mataṃ hi me sarva-loka-hitam. Tasya ca punaḥ etat mūlam - utthānaṃ ca, artha-santīraṇā ca. Nāsti hi karmataraṃ sarva-loka-hitatvāt. Yat ca kiñcit parākrāmāmi ahaṃ kimiti bhūtānām ānṛṇyaṃ gaccheyam, iha ca enān sukhayāmi, paratra ca svargam ārādhayantu. Tat etasmai arthāya iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā kimiti ciraṃ tiṣṭhet iti,

that my sons, grandsons and great-grandsons may act in conformity with it for the welfare of all the people. But difficult is this to do without supreme zeal.

1. The exact meanings of *vaca* and *vinīta* are not known. Other possibilities for *vraja* are 'cow-pen, road, short journey, walk, or gymnasium (? from *varcas*=vigour, energy)'; and for *vinīta*, '(trained) horse, or long journey, or place of religious exercises, or dressing room (?)'. It is to be also noted that the two words are mentioned between the 'bed-chamber' and the 'parks'.

2. See pp. 28-29.

tathā ca me putrā potā ca, prapotrā ca anuvataraṃ[6] sava-loka-hitāya. Dukaraṃ tu idaṃ añatra agena parākramena.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

tathā ca me putrāḥ pautrāḥ ca, prapautrāḥ ca anuvarteran sarva-loka-hitāya. Duṣkaraṃ tu idam anyatra agrāt parākramāt.

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3. The *Śukranītisāra* forbids the king's transacting any business on oral orders or his officials executing them. So they were perhaps held improper by the Council of Ministers.

4. According to Kauṭilya, the king is to summon the Council of Ministers in all emergent matters.

5. From *ni√dhyai*, 'to think of, to meditate' Buddh. Sansk. *nidhyapti*.

6. Other versions 'may be zealous, may exert themselves', Kāl. *palakamātu*.

ROCK EDICT 7

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka's impartiality towards all religious sects*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, desires that all sects should reside everywhere, (for) all of them wish (to acquire) self control and purity of mind[1].

But men are of various temperaments and of various preferences, (and) they will perform the whole, or they will perform (only) a part (of their duties)[2].

But inspite of (receiving) large gifts, those who have no self-control, or purity of mind, or gratitude and firm devotion, are mean indeed.

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1. This clause may be construed also as '....desires that all sects.... everywhere, and that all of them should wish etc.'
2. The intention of this edict was perhaps to tell other sects that although he was a Buddhist, Aśoka was not hostile but friendly to other sects, and that although he recognised differences in abilities and aims, he desired a certain moral standard from all of them.

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 7

Devānampiyo Piyadasi rājā sarvata ichati save pāsaṃḍā vaseyu, save te sayamaṃ ca bhāva-sudhiṃ ca ichati[3]. Jano tu ucāvaca-chaṃdo ucāvaca-rāgo, te sarvaṃ va kāsaṃti, eka-desaṃ va kasaṃti. Vipule tu pi dāne yasa nāsti sayame bhāva-sudhitā va, kataṃñatā va, daḍha-bhatitā ca, nicā bāḍhaṃ.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā sarvatra icchati sarve pārṣadāḥ vaseyuḥ, sarve te saṃyamaṃ ca bhāva-śuddhiṃ ca icchanti. Janaḥ tu uccāvaca-cchandaḥ uccāvaca-rāgaḥ, te sarvaṃ vā kariṣyanti, eka-deśaṃ vā kariṣyanti. Vipule tu api dāne yeṣāṃ nāsti saṃyamaḥ bhāva-śuddhiḥ vā, kṛtajñatā vā, dṛḍha-bhaktitā ca, (te) nīcāḥ bāḍham.

3. Some versions *ichaṃti*.

ROCK EDICT 8

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Commencement of the Dharma-tours*

In times past, kings[1] used to go out on pleasure-tours. In these, hunting and similar other amusements took place.

Now, the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, when he was crowned ten years, went to Sambodhi[2]. Thereby it (became) a Dharma tour.

In it, these take place—visits and gifts to Brāhmaṇas and ascetics ; visits to and provision of gold for (the support of) the aged ; and visits, Dharma instructions and Dharma questions, (as are) suitable for them, to the rural population.

This great pleasure becomes (as it were) another (kind of) revenue[3] for the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin.

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1. Some versions 'the Beloveds of the gods', Kāl. *devānampiyā*, see p. 10.
2. See p. 28.
3. I.e. 'gain, acquisition' ? The exact meaning of this clause is not clear.

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 8

Atikātaṃ aṃtaraṃ rājāno vihāra-yātāṃ ñayāsu. Eta magavyā, aññāni ca etārisāni abhīramakāni ahuṃsu. So devānaṃpriyo Piyadasi rājā dasa-varsābhisito saṃto ayāya Sambodhiṃ. Tenesā dhaṃma-yātā. Etayaṃ hoti—bāmhaṇa-samaṇānaṃ dasaṇe ca, dāne ca; thairānaṃ dasaṇe ca, hiraṃṇa-paṭividhāno ca; jānapadasa ca janasa darsanaṃ, dhaṃmānusasṭī ca, dhama-paripuchā ca tad-opayā. Esā bhuya rati bhavati devānaṃpiyasa Priyadasino rāño bhāge aṃñe.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Atikrāntam antaraṃ rājānaḥ vihāra-yatrāṃ nirayāṣiṣuḥ. Atra mṛgavyā, anyāni ca etādṛśāni abhiramakāṇi abhūvan. Tat devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā daśa-varṣābhiṣiktaḥ san ayāt Sambodhim. Tenaiṣā dharma-yātrā. Atredaṃ bhavati—brāhmaṇa-śramaṇānāṃ darśanaṃ ca, dānaṃ ca; sthavirāṇāṃ darśanaṃ ca, hiraṇya-pratividhānaṃ ca; jānapadasya ca janasya darśanaṃ, dharmānuśastiḥ ca, dharma-paripṛcchā ca tad-upagā. Eṣā bhūyaḥ ratiḥ bhavati devānāṃpriyasya Priyadarśinaḥ rājñaḥ bhāgaḥ anyaḥ.

ROCK EDICT 9

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Futility of conventional auspicious ceremonies and the superior merits of Dharma-practices*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

There are people (who) perform various auspicious ceremonies. During illnesses, or at the marriages of sons or daughters, or at the birth of sons[1], or (when setting out) on a journey—on these and other (occasions), people perform various auspicious ceremonies.

On these (occasions) again, women[2] perform manifold and various kinds of petty and meaningless auspicious ceremonies.

Now, auspicious ceremonies should certainly be performed, but of little fruit indeed, are auspicious ceremonies such as these.

But of great fruit is this auspicious ceremony, viz. the auspicious ceremony of Dharma. In it, these (are comprised)—proper behaviour towards slaves and servants ; commendable[3] deference towards elders ; commendable gentleness towards animals ; commendable gifts to Brāhmaṇas and ascetics—these and similar other (virtues) are called the auspicious ceremonies of Dharma.

Therefore, (this) has to be said by a father, or a son, or a brother, or a master[4]—'These are commendable ; these auspicious ceremonies should be performed until the fulfilment of the object thereof'[5].

And it has also been said, 'Commendable are gifts'[6]. But there is no such gift or benefit as the gift of Dharma or the benefit of Dharma.

Therefore indeed, a friend or a well-wisher, or a relative or a companion should (thus) exhort (others) on appropriate

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 9

Devānampiyo Priyadasi rājā eva āha: asti jano ucāvacaṃ maṃgalaṃ karote. Ābādhesu vā, āvāha-vīvāhesu vā, putra-lābhesu vā, pravāsaṃmhi vā—etamhī ca, añamhi ca jano ucāvacaṃ maṃgalaṃ karote. Eta tu mahiḍāyo bahukaṃ ca, bahu-vidhaṃ ca, chudaṃ ca, nirathaṃ ca maṃgalaṃ karote. Ta katavyameva tu maṃgalaṃ, apa-phalaṃ tu kho etārisaṃ maṃgalaṃ. Ayaṃ tu mahā-phale maṃgale, ya dhaṃma-maṃgale. Tateta—dāsa-bhatakamhi samya-pratipatī, gurūnaṃ apaciti sādhu, pāṇesu sayamo sādhu, bamhaṇa-samaṇānaṃ sādhu dānaṃ—eta ca, aña ca etārisaṃ dhaṃma-maṃgalaṃ nāma. Ta vatavyaṃ pitā va, putena vā, bhātrā vā, svāmikena vā—idaṃ sādhu, idaṃ katavya maṃgalaṃ āva tasa athasa nisṭānāya[7]. Asti ca pi vutaṃ—sādhu danaṃ iti. Na tu etārisaṃ asti dānaṃ va, anugaho va yārisaṃ dhaṃma-dānaṃ va, dhamanugaho va. Ta tu kho mitrena va, suhadayena vā, ñātikena va, sahāyena va ovāditavyaṃ tamhi tamhi pakaraṇe—idaṃ

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: asti janaḥ uccāvacaṃ maṅgalaṃ kurute. Ābādheṣu vā, āvāha-vivāheṣu vā, putra-lābheṣu vā, pravāse vā—etasmin ca, anyasmin ca janaḥ uccāvacaṃ maṅgalaṃ kurute. Atra tu mahilāḥ bahukaṃ ca, bahu-vidhaṃ ca, kṣudraṃ ca, nirarthaṃ ca maṅgalaṃ kurvate. Tat kartavyameva tu maṅgalam, alpa-phalaṃ tu khalu etādṛśaṃ maṅgalam. Idaṃ tu mahā-phalaṃ maṅgalaṃ, yat dharma-maṅgalam. Tatraitat—dāsa-bhṛtakeṣu samyak-pratipattiḥ, gurūṇām apacitiḥ sādhuḥ, prāṇeṣu saṃyamaḥ sādhuḥ, brāhmaṇa-śramaṇebhyaḥ sādhu dānam—etat ca, anyat ca etādṛśaṃ dharma-maṅgalaṃ nāma. Tat vaktavyaṃ pitrā vā, putreṇa vā, bhrātrā vā, svāmikena vā—idaṃ sādhu, idaṃ kartavyaṃ maṅgalaṃ yāvat tasya arthasya niṣṭhānam. Asti ca api uktaṃ—sādhu dānam iti. Na tu etādṛśam asti dānaṃ vā, anugrahaḥ vā yādṛśaṃ dharma-dānaṃ vā, dharmānugrahaḥ vā. Tat tu khalu mitreṇa vā, suhṛdayena vā, jñātikena vā, sahāyena vā avavaditavyaṃ tasmin tasmin prakaraṇe—idaṃ

occasions, viz. 'This ought to be done, this is commendable, by this it is possible to attain heaven'.

And what is a higher duty than this, viz. the attainment of heaven?

1. Other versions 'children', Kāl. *pajopadāye*.

2. Dhau. *ithī*, Shāhb. *striyaka*, Kāl. *abakajaniy..*, Māns. *abakajanika*, possibly from *arbhaka-janikā*, 'child-progenitresses', and not from *ambakā-j°*, 'nurses (or mothers) and wives'.

3. The three *sādhus* in these lines, absent in other versions, are irrelevant, inserted perhaps by the scribe, translator or engraver, in remembrance of RE 3, unless taken as qualifying and not predicative adjs.

4. Some versions add 'or by a friend, or an acquaintance, or even by a neighbour,' Kāl. *mita-saṃthutenā āva pativesiyenā pi*.

5. Some versions substitute the subsequent clauses upto the end of the edict, thus—" 'Even after the fulfilment of the object I shall (continue to) perform it.' The other (kinds of) auspicious ceremonies are (of) doubtful (fruit)—perhaps the object may be fulfilled (thereby), or perhaps not, and they bear fruit only in this world; but these auspicious ceremonies of Dharma are not limited by

kacaṃ, idaṃ sādhu iti, iminā saka svagaṃ ārādhetu iti. Ki ca iminā katavyataraṃ yathā svagāradhī ?

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

kṛtyam, idaṃ sādhu iti, anena śakyaḥ svargaḥ ārādhayitum iti. Kiṃ ca asmāt kartavyataraṃ yathā svargārāddhiḥ ?

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time ; even if the object is not fulfilled here, they produce in the next (world) the fruit of endless merit ; whereas if the object is fulfilled here, then thereby are obtained (the fruits of) both—by the auspicious ceremonies of Dharma are produced (the fulfilment of) the object here as well as endless merit in the next (world)"—(*Shāhb.* **Nivuṭaspi va puna**) *Kāl.* **imaṃ kachāmi ti. E hi itale magale, saṃsayikye se—siyā va taṃ aṭhaṃ nivaṭeyā, siyā punā no, hida-lokike ceva se ; iyaṃ punā dhaṃma-magale akālikye ; haṃce pi taṃ aṭhaṃ no nivaṭeti hida, aṭhaṃ palata anaṃtaṃ punā pasavati ; haṃce puna taṃ aṭhaṃ nivateti hidā, tato ubhayesaṃ ladhe hoti—hida cā se aṭhe, palata cā anaṃtaṃ punā pasavati tenā dhaṃma-magalenā.**

6. Found in the *Sādhusutta* of the Dīgha-nikāya, where also occur 'commendable is gentleness to animals' and 'there is no such gift as the gift of Dharma.'

7. Other versions *nivutiyā*, *°ṭiya*, *niphatiyā.*

ROCK EDICT 10

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *The object of Aśoka's exertions*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, does not consider glory or fame to be productive of (any) great value, except (the glory or fame he desires[1] on account of this, viz. that) at the present time and in the future, my[2] subjects may practise respectfulness towards the Dharma and may follow the practice of Dharma. For this alone, the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, desires glory or fame[3].

But whatever efforts the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin is making, all that (is) for the sake of (merit in) the next world, viz. that all (the people) may be of little evil.

But this (is) the evil, viz. non-(acquisition of) merit.

But this is indeed difficult to do by a small person or by a great one, except with supreme zeal, by giving up all.[4]

But by a great one, this is indeed more difficult to do.

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1. As in other versions ; Kāl. *yaṃ pi yaso vā kiti vā ichati.*
2. From the position of *me* in the other versions, the clause may even mean 'the people may be made by me to practise etc,' or 'the people may practise my respectfulness etc.'
3. This edict was probably issued to answer those critics of Aśoka, who surmised that all his activities were for the sake of earning fame.

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 10

Devānampiyo Priyadasi rājā yaso va, kiti va na mahāthāvahā mañate añata tadātpane dighāya ca me jano dhamma-susrumsā susrusatā, dhamma-vutam ca anuvidhiyatām. Etakāya devānampiyo Piyadasi rājā yaso va, kiti va ichati. Yam tu kici parākamate devānampiyo Priyadasi rājā, ta savam pāratrikāya kimti sakale apa-parisrave asa. Esa tu parisave, ya apumñam. Dukaram tu kho etam chudakena va janena, usatena va añatra agena parākramena savam paricajitpā. Eta tu kho usatena dukaram.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāmpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā yaśaḥ vā, kīrtim vā na mahārthāvahām manyate anyatra (asmāt, tat yathā—) tadātve dīrghāyām ca me janaḥ dharma-śuśrūsām śuśrūṣatām, dharma-vṛttam ca anuvidhattām. Etasmai devānāmpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā yaśaḥ vā, kīrtim vā icchati. Yat tu kiñcit parākrāmati devānāmpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā, tat sarvam pāratrikāya kimiti sakalaḥ (lokaḥ) alpa-parisravaḥ[5] syāt. Eṣaḥ tu parisravaḥ, yat apuṇyam. Duṣkaram tu khalu etat kṣudrakeṇa vā janena, utsṛtena vā anyatra agrāt parākramāt sarvam parityajya. Etat tu khalu utsṛtena duṣkara(taram).

4. This means probably not renunciation of the world but of other material objectives.

5. Some would prefer *apaparisrava*, 'devoid of sin.' Cf. the Jaina term *āsrava*, 'inflow (of sin).'

ROCK EDICT 11

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Superiority of the gift of Dharma*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin spoke thus :

There is no such gift as the gift of Dharma, or acquaintance through Dharma, or the distribution of Dharma[1], or kinship through Dharma.

Therein these take place—proper behaviour towards slaves and servants ; commendable[2] respectfulness towards mother (and) father ; commendable gifts to friends, acquaintances, relatives, (and) to Brāhmaṇas and ascetics ; commendable non-killing of animals.

(Therefore) this should be said by a father, or by a son, or by a brother[3], or by a friend, an acquaintance, or a relative[4], or even by neighbours—'This is commendable, this ought to be done'.

By doing it so, takes place the attainment of (happiness in) this world, and in the next world is produced endless merit by that gift of Dharma.

1. The terms *dhamma-dāna* and *dh°-saṃvibhāga* occur in the Itivuttaka.
2. For the three irrelevant *sādhus* in this para, omitted in other versions, see p. 88, note 3.

GIRNAR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 11

Devānaṃpriyo Piyadasi rājā evaṃ āha : nāsti etārisaṃ dānaṃ yārisaṃ dhaṃma-dānaṃ, dhaṃma-saṃstavo vā, dhaṃma-saṃvibhāgo vā, dhaṃma-saṃbaṃdho va. Tata idaṃ bhavati—dāsa-bhatakamhi samya-pratipatī, mātari pitari sādhu susrusā, mita-sastuta-ñātikānaṃ bāmhaṇa-sramaṇānaṃ sādhu dānaṃ, prāṇānaṃ anāraṃbho sādhu. Eta vatavyaṃ pitā va, putrena va, bhātā va, mita-sastuta-ñātikena va, āva paṭīvesiyehi—ida sādhu, ida katavyaṃ. So tathā karuṃ ilokacasa āradho hoti, parata ca anaṃtaṃ puiñaṃ bhavati tena dhamma-dānena.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha : nāsti etādṛśaṃ dānaṃ yādṛśaṃ dharma-dānaṃ, dharma-saṃstavaḥ vā, dharma-saṃvibhāgaḥ vā, dharma-sambandhaḥ vā. Tatra idaṃ bhavati—dāsa-bhṛtakeṣu samyak-pratipattiḥ, mātari pitari sādhuḥ śuśrūṣā, mitra-saṃstuta-jñātikebhyaḥ brāhmaṇa-śramaṇebhyaḥ sādhu dānaṃ, prāṇānām anālambhaḥ sādhuḥ. Etat vaktavyaṃ pitrā vā, putreṇa vā, bhrātrā vā, mitra-saṃstuta-jñātikena vā, yāvat prativeśikaiḥ—idaṃ sādhu, idaṃ kartavyam. Tasmin tathā kriyamāṇe aiha-laukikasya ārādhaḥ bhavati, paratra ca anantaṃ puṇyaṃ bhavati tena dharma-dānena.

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3. Some versions add 'or by a master', Kāl. *ṣuvāmikyena pi.*
4. Omitted in other versions.

ROCK EDICT 12

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *The desirability of inter-communal understanding and regard*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, honours all sects, whether ascetics or householders, and he honours them with gifts and honours of various kinds.

But the Beloved of the gods does not value gifts or honours so much as that the worthiness of all sects may increase.

Now, the increase of worthiness (may be) of many kinds, but its root is this, viz. the guarding of (one's) speech, that is to say, that the praising of one's own sect or the blaming of other sects may not take place without occasion, or that (it) may be light on respective occasions.

In fact, other sects ought to be honoured in various ways.

By doing so, one promotes one's own sect and also benefits other sects; (and) by doing otherwise, one hurts one's own sect and also harms other sects.

Whoever praises his own sect or blames other sects, all (that is done) out of devotion to one's own sect (with this thought), viz. 'That we may glorify our own sect'. But by doing so, one injures one's own sect all the more severely.

Therefore it is intercommunion[1] that is commendable, that is to say, that (people) should listen to and respect the doctrines of one another.

And this indeed is the desire of the Beloved of the gods that all sects may be of much learning and may be of noble traditions[2].

And those who are devoted to (their) respective sects, are to be told—'The Beloved of the gods does not value

GIRNĀR TEXT OF ROCK EDICT 12

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi rājā sava-pāsaṃḍāni ca[3] pavajitāni ca gharastāni ca pūjayati, dānena ca vividhāya ca pūjāya pūjayati ne. Na tu tathā dānaṃ va, pūjā va devānaṃpiyo maṃñate yathā kiti sāra-vaḍhī asa sava-pāsaṃḍānaṃ. Sāra-vaḍhī tu bahu-vidhā, tasa tu idaṃ mūlaṃ, ya vaci-gutī kiṃti ātpa-pāsaṃḍa-pūjā va, para-pāsaṃḍa-garahā va no bhave aprakaraṇamhi, lahukā va asa tamhi tamhi prakaraṇe. Pūjetayā tu eva para-pāsaṃḍā tena tena prakaraṇena[4]. Evaṃ karuṃ ātpa-pāsaṃḍaṃ ca vaḍhayati, para-pāsaṃḍasa ca upakaroti; tad-aṃñathā karoto ātpa-pāsaḍaṃ ca chaṇati, para-pāsaṃḍasa ca pi apakaroti. Yo hi koci ātpa-pāsaṃḍaṃ pūjayati, para-pāsaṃḍaṃ va garahati—savaṃ ātpa-pāsaṃḍa-bhatiyā kiṃti ātpa-pāsaṃḍaṃ dīpayema iti. So ca puna tatha karoto ātpa-pāsaṃḍaṃ bāḍhataraṃ upahanāti. Ta samavāyo[5] eva sādhu kiṃti añamaṃñasa dhaṃmaṃ sruṇāru ca, susuṃsera ca. Evaṃ hi devānaṃpiyasa ichā kiṃti sava-pāsaṃḍā bahu-srutā ca asu,

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā sarva-pārṣadān ca pravrajitān ca gṛhasthān ca pūjayati, dānena ca vividhayā ca pūjayā pūjayati enān. Na tu tathā dānaṃ vā, pūjāṃ vā devānāṃpriyaḥ manyate yathā kimiti sāra-vṛddhiḥ syāt sarva-pārṣadānām. Sāra-vṛddhiḥ tu bahu-vidhā, tasyāḥ tu idaṃ mūlaṃ, yat vaco-guptiḥ kimiti ātma-pārṣada-pūjā vā, para-pārṣada-garhā vā no bhavet aprakaraṇe, laghukā vā syāt tasmin tasmin prakaraṇe. Pūjayitavyāḥ tu eva para-pārṣadāḥ tena tena prakaraṇena. Evaṃ kurvan (janaḥ) ātma-pārṣadaṃ ca vardhayati, para-pārṣadasya ca upakaroti; tad-anyathā kurvāṇaḥ ātma-pārṣadaṃ ca kṣiṇoti, para-pārṣadasya ca api apakaroti. Yaḥ hi kaścit ātma-pārṣadaṃ pūjayati, para-pārṣadaṃ vā garhati—sarvam ātma-pārṣada-bhaktyā kimiti ātma-pārṣadaṃ dīpayema iti. Saḥ ca punaḥ tathā kurvāṇaḥ ātma-pārṣadaṃ bāḍhataram upahanti. Tat samavāyaḥ eva sādhuḥ kimiti (janāḥ) anyo'nyasya dharmaṃ śṛṇvantu ca, śuśrūṣeran ca. Evaṃ hi devānāṃ-priyasya icchā kimiti sarva-pārṣadāḥ bahu-śrutāḥ ca syuḥ,

gifts or honours so much as that the worthiness of all sects may increase'.

And for this purpose, many (officers) are occupied, (viz.) the Dharma-Mahāmātras, the Mahāmātras in charge of women[6], officers (in charge) of outlying tracts, and other classes (of officers).

And this is the fruit of it, viz. (by it) take place the promotion of one's own sect as well as the glorification of the Dharma.

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1. This word is perhaps a better rendering than 'concord, or harmony' of *sam-ava√i*, 'to come together', cf. *samaveta*. The latter part of the sentence too makes this clear.
2. Or 'doctrines'.
3. This and the next *ca* in this sentence, absent in other versions, are misleading. For the third *ca*, Kāl. substitutes *vā* which expresses the meaning more clearly.

kalāṇāgamā ca asu. Ye ca tatra tata prasaṃnā, tehi vatavyaṃ—devānaṃpiyo no tathā dānaṃ va pūjāṃ va maṃñate yathā kiṃti sāra-vaḍhī asa sarva-pāsaḍānaṃ. Bahukā ca etāya athā vyāpatā—dhaṃma-mahāmātā ca, ithījhakha-mahāmātā ca, vaca-bhūmīkā ca, añe ca nikāyā. Ayaṃ ca etasa phala, ya ātpa-pāsaṃḍa-vaḍhī ca hoti, dhaṃmasa ca dīpanā.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

kalyāṇāgamāḥ ca syuḥ. Ye ca tatra tatra prasannāḥ, tebhyaḥ vaktavyaṃ—devānāṃpriyaḥ no tathā dānaṃ vā pūjāṃ vā manyate yathā kimiti sāra-vṛddhiḥ syāt sarva-pārṣadānām. Bahukāḥ ca etasmai arthāya vyāpṛtāḥ—dharma-mahāmātrāḥ ca, stry-adhyakṣa-mahāmātrāḥ ca, vraja-bhūmikāḥ ca, anye ca nikāyāḥ. Idaṃ ca etasya phalaṃ, yat ātma-pārṣada-vṛddhiḥ ca bhavati, dharmasya ca dīpanā.

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4. Kāl. *ākālena* ; Shāhb., Māns. *akarena.*

5. Shāhb. *sayamo* = *saṃyamaḥ* which shows that *samavāya* was taken there probably as *śama-vādaḥ*, 'restraint in speech.'

6. See p. 29.

Kālsī version
Date.: *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject: *The evils of conquest by war and the excellence of conquest by Dharma*

The Kaliṅgas[1] were conquered by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, (when he was) crowned eight years.

One hundred and fifty thousand in number (were) the men who were carried away from there; one hundred thousand in number were slain there; and nearly[2] as many died.

Thereafter, when the Kaliṅgas had been newly conquered, the Beloved of the gods felt a strong inclination[3] for Dharma, desire for Dharma and instruction in Dharma.

Now, it is repentance that the Beloved of the gods felt on conquering the Kaliṅgas.

Indeed, the slaughter or death or deportation of the people (that take place) there when an unconquered country is conquered, is considered very painful and serious by the Beloved of the gods.

And this is considered even more serious than that by the Beloved of the gods, (viz.)—

Those who live there—Brāhmaṇas or ascetics or other sects or householders—among whom are practised these, (viz.)—respectfulness towards superiors, respectfulness towards mother and father, respectfulness towards elders, proper behaviour towards (and) firm devotion to friends, acquaintances, companions, relatives, slaves and servants—to them thereby is caused injury or slaughter or the going away[4] of (their) beloved ones.

Aṭha-vaṣābhiṣitaṣā devānaṃpiyaṣa Piyadaṣine lājine Kaligyā vijitā. Diyaḍha-mite pāna-ṣata-ṣahaśe ye taphā apavuḍhe; śata-ṣahaṣa-mite tata hate; bahu-tāvatake vā maṭe. Tato pachā adhunā ladheṣu Kaligyeṣu tive dhaṃma-vāye[5], dhaṃma-kāmatā, dhaṃmānuṣathi cā devānaṃpiyaṣā. Ṣe athi anuṣaye[6] devānaṃpiyaṣā vijinitu Kaligyāni. Avijitaṃ hi vijinamane e tatā vadha vā, malane vā, apavahe vā janaṣā, ṣe bāḍha vedaniya-mute, gulu-mute cā devānaṃpiyaṣā. Iyaṃ pi cu tato galu-matatale devānaṃpiyaṣā—ye tatā vaṣati—bābhanā va, ṣamanā vā, ane vā pāśaṃḍa, gihithā vā—yeśu vihitā eṣa—agabhuti-ṣuṣuṣā, mātā-piti-ṣuṣuṣā, galu-ṣuṣuṣā, mita-ṣaṃthuta-ṣahāya-nātikeṣu dāśa-bhaṭakaṣi ṣamyā-paṭipati diḍha-bhatitā—teṣaṃ tatā hoti upaghāte[7] vā, vadhe vā, abhilatānaṃ vā vinikhamane.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Aṣṭa-varṣābhiṣiktena devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā Kaliṅgāḥ vijitāḥ. Dvyardha-mātraṃ prāṇa-śata-sahasraṃ yat tataḥ apoḍhaṃ; śata-sahasra-mātraṃ tatra hataṃ; bahu-tāvatkaṃ vā mṛtam. Tataḥ paścāt adhunā labdheṣu Kaliṅgeṣu tīvraḥ dharma-vātaḥ, dharma-kāmitā, dharmānuśastiḥ ca devānāṃpriyasya. Tat asti anuśayaḥ devānāṃpriyasya vijitya Kaliṅgān. Avijite hi vijīyamāne yaḥ tatra vadhaḥ vā, maraṇaṃ vā, apavāhaḥ vā janasya, tat bāḍhaṃ vedanīya-mataṃ, guru-mataṃ ca devānāṃpriyasya. Idam api tu tataḥ guru-matataraṃ devānāṃpriyasya—ye tatra vasanti—brāhmaṇāḥ vā, śramaṇāḥ vā, anye vā pārṣadāḥ, gṛhasthāḥ vā—yeṣu vihitāḥ etāḥ—agra-bhūti-śuśrūṣā, mātā-pitṛ-śuśrūṣā, guru-śuśrūṣā, mitra-saṃstuta-sahāya-jñātikeṣu dāsa-bhṛtakeṣu samyak-pratipattiḥ dṛḍha-bhaktitā—teṣāṃ tatra bhavati upaghātaḥ vā, vadhaḥ vā, abhiraktānāṃ vā viniṣkramaṇam.

Again, of those even who are (themselves) of good conduct[8] (and) whose affection (for their beloved ones) is undiminished—the friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives suffer misfortunes, (and) thereby that too becomes an injury to themselves.

And these (misfortunes) fall to the lot of all men and are considered serious by the Beloved of the gods.

And, there is no country—except among the Yonas—where do not exist these classes (of religious people, viz.) the Brāhmaṇas and the ascetics.

And there is no country where men are not attached at all to one or other (religious) sect.

Therefore, even a hundredth part or a thousandth part of the number of men who were slain, who died or were carried away at that time when the Kaliṅgas were conquered, is now considered serious indeed by the Beloved of the gods.

And even if one does harm, he whom it is possible to forgive, the Beloved of the gods thinks, should be forgiven.

And even the forest-dwellers[9] that are in the dominion of the Beloved of the gods—they too are entreated and reasoned with, and they are told of the might of the Beloved of the gods in spite of (his) remorse, in order that they may feel ashamed and be not killed[10].

Indeed, the Beloved of the gods wishes all beings non-injury, restraint (and) impartiality, (even) in case of offensive conduct.

And this is considered by the Beloved of the gods as the best conquest, viz. conquest by the Dharma.

Yeṣaṃ vā pi ṣuvihitānaṃ ṣinehe avipahine—etānaṃ mita-śaṃthuta-ṣahāya-nātikya viyaṣanaṃ pāpunāti, tatā ṣe pi tānamevā upaghāte hoti. Paṭibhāge cā eṣa ṣava-manuṣānaṃ, gulu-mate cā devānaṃpiyaṣā. Nathi cā ṣe janapade yatā nathi ime nikāyā—ānatā Yoneṣu—baṃhmane cā, ṣamane cā. Nathi cā kuvāpi janapadaṣi yatā nathi manuṣāna ekatalaṣi pi pāṣaḍaṣi no[11] **nāma paṣāde. Ṣe avatake jane tadā Kaliṃgeṣu ladheṣu hate cā, maṭe cā, apavuḍhe cā, tato ṣate bhāge vā, ṣahaṣa-bhāge vā aja gulu-mate vā devānaṃpiyaṣā.** (*Shāhbāzg.* **Yo pi ca apakareyati** (*or* °ya ti ?), **kṣamitaviya-mate va devanaṃpriyasa, yaṃ śako kṣamanaye. Ya pi ca aṭavi devanaṃpriyasa vijite bhoti—ta pi anuneti anunijhapeti, anutape pi ca prabhave devanaṃpriyasa vucati teṣa kiti avatrapeyu, na ca haṃñeyasu. Ichati hi devanaṃpriyo savra-bhutana akṣati saṃyamaṃ sama-cariyaṃ rabhasiye**[12]. **Ayi ca mukha-muta vijaye) devānaṃpiyaṣā,**

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Yeṣāṃ vā api suvihitānāṃ snehaḥ aviprahīnaḥ—eteṣāṃ mitra-saṃstuta-sahāya-jñātikāḥ vyasanaṃ prāpnuvanti, tatra tat api teṣāmeva upaghātaḥ bhavati. Pratibhāgaḥ ca etat sarva-manuṣyāṇāṃ, guru-mataṃ ca devānāṃpriyasya. Nāsti ca saḥ janapadaḥ yatra na santi ime nikāyāḥ—anyatra Yonebhyaḥ—brāhmaṇāḥ ca, śramaṇāḥ ca. Nāsti ca kvāpi janapade yatra nāsti manuṣyāṇām ekatare api nāma pārṣade prasādaḥ. Tat yāvatkaḥ janaḥ tadā Kaliṅgeṣu labdheṣu hataḥ ca, mṛtaḥ ca, apoḍhaḥ ca, tataḥ śata-bhāgaḥ vā, sahasra-bhāgaḥ vā adya guru-mataḥ eva devānāṃpriyasya. Yaḥ api ca apakaroti (°kuryāt iti vā), **kṣantavya-mataḥ eva devānāṃpriyasya, yaḥ śakyaḥ kṣamaṇāya. Yāḥ api ca aṭavyaḥ (=ye aṭavī-vāsinaḥ) devānāṃpriyasya vijite bhavanti—te api anunīyante anunidhyāpyante, anutāpe api ca prabhāvaḥ devānāṃpriyasya ucyate tebhyaḥ kimiti avatraperan, na ca hanyeran. Icchati hi devānāṃpriyaḥ sarva-bhūtānām akṣatiṃ saṃyamaṃ sama-caryāṃ rābhasye. Ayaṃ ca mukhya-mataḥ vijayaḥ devānāṃpriyasya,**

And that (conquest by the Dharma) again, has been won by the Beloved of the gods here (in his dominion) and among all (his) Borderers—even as far as six hundred *yojanas*, where (rules) the Yona king Antiyoga[13] by name, and beyond that Antiyoga (where rule) the four kings—Tulamaya by name, Antekina by name, Makā by name and Alikasudara by name, (and) likewise down below (in the south, among) the Colas and the Pāṇḍyas, as far as Tāmraparṇī.

Likewise, here in the king's dominion, among the Yonas and the Kambojas, among the Nābhakas and the Nābhapaṃktis, among the Bhojas and the Pitinikas, among the Andhras and the Pāradas—everywhere are followed the Dharma instructions of the Beloved of the gods.

Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the gods do not go—they (the people of those countries) too, having heard of the Dharma practices, the (Dharma) prescriptions and the Dharma instructions of the Beloved of the gods, follow the Dharma and will[14] (continue to) follow (it).

That conquest which has been won everywhere by this, generates the feeling of satisfaction.

(And) that satisfaction is obtained in conquest by the Dharma.

But (of) small (consequence) indeed, is that satisfaction.

It is (matters) of the next world alone that the Beloved of the gods considers to be of great consequence.

And for this purpose is this Dharma-rescript written that my sons (and) great-grandsons (that there) may be, may

ye dhaṃma-vijaye. Ṣe ca punā ladhe devānaṃpiyaṣā hida ca, ṣaveṣu ca ateṣu—a ṣaṣu pi yojana-ṣateṣu ata Atiyoge nāma Yona-lājā, palaṃ cā tenā Aṃtiyogenā catāli 4 lajāne—Tulamaye nāma, Aṃtekine nāma, Makā nāma, Alikyaṣudale nāma, nicaṃ Coḍa-Paṃḍiyā, avaṃ Taṃbapaṃniyā hevamevā. Hevamevā hidā lāja-viśavaṣi, Yona-Kaṃbojeṣu Nābhaka-Nābhapaṃtiṣu Bhoja-Pitinikyeṣu Adha-Pāladeṣu—ṣavatā devānaṃpiyaṣā dhaṃmānuṣathi anuvataṃti. Yata pi dutā devānaṃpiyasā no yaṃti—te pi sutu devānaṃpiyasā dhaṃma-vutaṃ vidhanaṃ dhaṃmānusathi, dhaṃmaṃ anuvidhiyaṃti, anuvidhiyisaṃti cā. Ye se ladhe etakenā hoti savatā vijaye, piti-lase se. Gadhā[15] sā hoti piti dhaṃma-vijayaṣi. Lahukā cu kho sā piti. Pālaṃtikyameva mahā-phalaṃ maṃnati devānaṃpiye. Etāye cā aṭhāye iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi likhitā kiti putā papotā me asu, navaṃ vijaya ma vijayataviya maniṣu;

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

yaḥ dharma-vijayaḥ. Saḥ ca punaḥ labdhaḥ devānāṃpriyasya iha ca, sarveṣu ca anteṣu—ā ṣaḍbhyaḥ api yojana-śatebhyaḥ yatra Antiyogaḥ nāma Yona-rājaḥ, paraṃ ca tasmāt Antiyogāt catvāraḥ 4 rājānaḥ—Tulamayaḥ nāṃa, Antekinaḥ nāma, Makā nāma, Alikasudaraḥ nāma, nīcaṃ Cola-Pāṇḍyāḥ, yāvat Tāmraparṇīm evameva. Evameva iha rāja-viṣaye, Yona-Kambojeṣu Nābhaka-Nābhapaṃktiṣu Bhoja-Pitinikeṣu Andhra-Pāradeṣu—sarvatra devānāṃpriyasya dharmānuśastayaḥ anuvṛtyante. Yatra api dūtāḥ devānāṃpriyasya no yānti—te api śrutvā devānāṃpriyasya dharma-vṛttaṃ vidhānaṃ dharmānuśastiṃ, dharmam anuvidadhati, anuvidhāsyanti ca. Yaḥ saḥ labdhaḥ etakena bhavati sarvatra vijayaḥ, prīti-rasaḥ saḥ. Labdhā sā bhavati prītiḥ dharma-vijaye. Laghukā tu khalu sā prītiḥ. Pāratrikameva mahā-phalaṃ manyate devānāṃpriyaḥ. Etasmai ca arthāya iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ likhitā kimiti putrāḥ prapautrāḥ me syuḥ, navaṃ vijayaṃ mā vijetavyaṃ manyeran;

not consider new conquests worth making; that (even) in conquests by arms, (if such are at all undertaken by them), mercy and light punishments may please them; and that they may consider that alone as conquest which is Dharma-conquest—(for) it bears fruit in this world (as also) in the next world.

And may all (their) intense devotion be the devotion to exertion (in practising the Dharma)—(for) that bears fruit indeed in this world, (as also) in the next world.

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1. See pp. 17 ff. and 27.
2. *Bahu-tāvatake* = 'many times that number' would make it too large. It is better to take *bahu* as = 'little less', in the sense of *īṣad-asamāpti* of the grammarians.
3. *Vāta* here is 'wind' of Indian medicine, meaning 'mental disposition', one of the three constituents of the body, the other two being bile (*pitta*) and phlegm (*kapha*).
4. *Vinikhamane*, Shāhb. *nikramaṇaṃ*, is not 'deportation', for which *apa√vah* has already been twice used; have we here the first historical reference to Indian emigration (perhaps to south-east Asian countries)?
5. Shāhb. *dhrama-śilana*, '(desire for) the practice of Dharma'.
6. Shāhb. *anusocana*.
7. Shāhb. *apagratho*, possibly from √*granth*, cf. *grathita* = *hata*, *hiṃsita*.
8. Some explain *suvihita* as 'well provided for', but cf. *yeṣu vihitāḥ etāḥ* above.
9. Gir. *aṭaviyo*, perhaps = 'wild aboriginal tribes'.

ṣayakaṣi[16] yo vijayaṣi khaṃti cā, lahu-daṃḍatā cā · locetu; tameva cā vijayaṃ manatu ye dhaṃma-vijaye—ṣe hidalokikya-palalokiye. Ṣavā ca kaṃ[17] nilati hotu uyāma[18]-lati—ṣā hi hidalokika-palalokikyā.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

sāyakaiḥ yaḥ vijayaḥ (tatrāpi) kṣāntiḥ ca laghu-daṇḍatā ca (tebhyaḥ) rocetām; tameva ca vijayaṃ manyantāṃ yaḥ dharma-vijayaḥ—saḥ aihalaukika-pāralaukikaḥ. Sarvā ca sā niratiḥ bhavatu udyama-ratiḥ—sā hi aihalaukika-pāralaukikī.

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10. See p. 37.
11. This negation is redundant.
12. Gir. *mādavaṃ*, Kāl. *madava*, 'gentleness'.
13. For these foreign kings as also for the peoples and countries named in the following clauses, see pp. 24-27.
14. Are the present and the future tenses used here to be understood in the optative or the imperative sense? Cf. *yāti* in the Sārnāth 'postscript' to SPE, p. 131, note.
15. Other versions *ladhā*, *°dha*. If *ga°* is not engraver's error for *la°*, the word may perhaps be derived from *gāddhā*, cf. Pali *gādhati*, 'to stand fast'; or even from *gṛhīta*?
16. Shāhb. *spakaspi*; Gir. *sarasake*=*śara-śakya*, 'obtained by means of weapons', or=*sva-rasaka*, '(even if conquests were) pleasing (to them)' are suggested by some.
17. A pronoun used mostly as an indeclinable, but its plural form sometimes being *kāni* (*nāni*).
18. Shāhb. and Māns. *dhraṃma*, *dhrama*, see p. 35.

ROCK EDICT 14

Girnār version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *A review of the Rock Edicts*

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin.

(These rescripts)[1] are (written) in brief, (or) in medium (length, or) elaborately.

But not all[2] occur everywhere—(for) large indeed is (my) dominion and much has been written, and I shall cause yet more to be written.

And there are here some (matters which have been) spoken of again and again—because of the interest of those respective subjects, in order that the people may act accordingly.

If some thereof are written incompletely—(it is so) because of the locality, or in consideration of the object[3], or by the fault of the engraver.

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1. This edict was possibly issued after Aśoka's visit to some spots where the REs had been engraved. He is referring here to the REs collectively.
2. It is not clear if the reference is to the different edicts or to the varying contents thereof.
3. E.g. RE 13 was not engraved in Kaliṅga and the SKREs not everywhere, see pp. 8 and 63.

Ayaṃ dhaṃma-lipī devānaṃpriyena Priyadasinā rāñā lekhāpitā. Asti eva saṃkhitena, asti majhamena, asti vistatena. Na ca sarvaṃ sarvata ghaṭitaṃ—mahālake hi vijitaṃ, bahu ca likhitaṃ, likhāpayisaṃ ceva[4]. Asti ca eta kaṃ[5] puna puna vutaṃ[6]—tasa tasa athasa mādhūratāya kiṃti jano tathā paṭipajetha. Tatra ekadā asamātaṃ likhitaṃ asa—desaṃ va sachāya, kāraṇaṃ va alocetpā, lipikarāparadhena va.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā lekhitā. Santi eva saṃkṣiptena, santi madhyamena, santi vistṛtena. Na ca sarvaṃ sarvatra ghaṭitaṃ—mahallakaṃ hi vijitaṃ, bahu ca likhitaṃ, lekhayiṣyāmi caiva. Asti ca atra tat punaḥ punaḥ uktaṃ—tasya tasya arthasya madhuratāyai kimiti janaḥ tathā pratipadyeta. Tatra ekadā (=kiñcit) asamāptaṃ likhitaṃ syāt—deśaṃ vā saṅkhyāya, kāraṇaṃ vā ālocya, lipikarāparādhena vā.

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4. Kāl. *ceva nikyaṃ*; the meaning of *nikyaṃ* is unknown; possibly derived not from *niccaṃ*=*nityam*, 'always', but from *nikyāyaṃ*=*nikāyam*, 'many (more)'. At the end of RE 12, for *nikāyā* of Girnar, Kālsī has *nikyāyā*.

5. See p. 105, note 17.

6. Some versions *lapite*, *°taṃ*.

TWO SEPARATE KALIṄGA ROCK EDICTS

These two inscriptions are found in Dhaulī and Jaugaḍa, see p. 63. Also see p. 21.

SEPARATE KALIṄGA ROCK EDICT 1

Dhaulī version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Need of integrity on the part of Judicial Officers in the administration of the law*

By the word of the Beloved of the gods, the City Judge Mahāmātras at Tosalī[1] are to be told :

Whatever I consider (to be good), in (respect of) that I desire that I may carry (it) out by deeds and may accomplish (it) by (various) means.

And this is considered by me the principal means for (accomplishing) this object, viz. (to give) instructions to you.

You are occupied among many thousands of people indeed, (with this object in view, viz.) 'That we may gain the affections of men'.

All men are my children. As for (my own) children I desire that they may be provided with all the welfare and happiness of this world and of the next world, so do I desire for all men as well.

But you do not understand how far extends this object (of mine). If some (of you) understand it, they too (understand only) a part, (and) not the whole (of it).

DHAULĪ TEXT OF SEPARATE KALIṄGA ROCK EDICT 1

Devānampiyasa vacanena Tosaliyaṃ mahāmāta nagala-viyohālakā vataviya : aṃ kichi dakhāmi hakaṃ, taṃ ichāmi kiṃti kaṃmana paṭipādayehaṃ, duvālate ca ālabhehaṃ. Esa ca me mokhya-mata duvāla etasi aṭhasi, aṃ tuphesu anusathi. Tuphe hi bahūsu pāna-sahasesu āyata—panayaṃ gachema su munisānaṃ. Save munise pajā mamā. Athā pajāye ichāmi hakaṃ kiṃti savena hita-sukhena hidalokika-pālalokikena yūjevū ti, tathā sava-munisesu pi ichāmi hakaṃ. No ca pāpunātha āva-gamuke iyaṃ aṭhe. Kecha va eka-pulise pāpunāti etaṃ, se pi desaṃ, no savaṃ.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyasya vacanena Tosalyāṃ mahāmātrāḥ nagara-vyavahārakāḥ vaktavyāḥ : yat kiñcit paśyāmi ahaṃ, tasmin icchāmi kimiti karmaṇā pratipādayeyaṃ, dvārataḥ ca ārabheya. Etat ca me mukhya-mataṃ dvāram etasmin arthe, yat yuṣmāsu anuśastiḥ. Yūyaṃ hi bahuṣu prāṇa-sahasreṣu āyatāḥ—praṇayaṃ gacchema svit manuṣyāṇām. Sarve manuṣyāḥ prajāḥ mama. Yathā prajāsu icchāmi ahaṃ kimiti sarveṇa hita-sukhena aihalaukika-pāralaukikena yujyeran (prajāḥ) iti, tathā sarva-manuṣyeṣu api icchāmi aham. Na ca prāpnutha yāvat-gamakaḥ ayam arthaḥ. Kaścit vā eka-puruṣaḥ prāpnoti etat, saḥ api deśaṃ, no sarvam.

Now, you must attend to this (matter)—Although fully law-abiding[2], there are some persons who are placed in confinement or are harassed. There is passed by him without cause, an order of imprisonment[3], and many other persons[4] suffer further.

Therefore you should strive (thus), viz. 'That we may act rightly[5]'.

But on account of these (various[6] causes), one does not act rightly, (viz.)—owing to envy, anger, cruelty, hurry, indifference, laziness, (and) fatigue.

Therefore, you should strive, (thus) viz. 'That these (causes) may not arise in us'.

And the root of all this is absence of anger and absence of hurry.

Those who feel fatigued in (the administration of) justice, would not rise higher, but one ought to move steadily, go on and advance[7].

He among you who understands (the matter) thus, should say (to his colleagues)—'Be mindful of discharging (your) debt (to the king); thus and thus are the instructions of the Beloved of the gods; of great fruit is the proper observance thereof, (and) of great evil (is their) improper observance; by the improper carrying out thereof is gained neither heaven nor the king's satisfaction'.

Of double effect is this work; what could be greater than it[8]?

But if this is rightly carried out, you will attain heaven and will (also) discharge (your) debts to me.

This rescript is to be listened to (by all) on (days of) the constellation of Tiṣya[9].

Dekhata hi tuphe etaṃ—suvihitā pi nitiyaṃ eka-pulise[10] pi athi ye baṃdhanaṃ vā, palikilesaṃ vā pāpunāti. Tata hoti akasmā tena badhanaṃtika, aṃne ca bahu-jane daviye dukhīyati. Tata ichitaviye tuphehi kiṃti majhaṃ paṭipādayemā ti. Imehi cu jātehi no saṃpaṭipajati—isāya āsulopena niṭhūliyena tūlanāya anāvūtiya ālasiyena kilamathena. Se ichitaviye kiṃti ete jātā no huvevu mamā ti. Etasa ca savasa mūle anāsulope atūlanā ca. Nitiyaṃ e kilaṃte siyā, na te ugache—saṃcalitaviye tu, vaṭitaviye, etaviye vā. Hevaṃmeva e dakheya tuphāka, tena vataviye—ānaṃne dekhata[11], hevaṃ ca hevaṃ ca devānaṃpiyasa anusathi; se mahā-phale e tasa saṃpaṭipāda, mahā-apāye asaṃpaṭipati; vipaṭipādayamīne hi etaṃ, nathi svagasa āladhi, no lājāladhi. Duāhale hi imasa kaṃmasa; me kute mano-atileke? Saṃpaṭipajamīne cu etaṃ, svagaṃ ālādhayisatha, mama ca ānaniyaṃ ehatha. Iyaṃ ca lipi tisa-nakhatena sotaviyā.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Paśyata hi yūyam etat—suvihitāḥ api nītyām eka-puruṣāḥ api santi ye bandhanaṃ vā, parikleśaṃ vā prāpnuvanti. Tatra bhavati akasmāt tena bandhanāntikam, anye ca bahu-janāḥ davīyaḥ duḥkhāyante. Tataḥ eṣṭavyaṃ yuṣmābhiḥ kimiti madhyaṃ pratipādayema iti. Ebhiḥ tu jātaiḥ no saṃpratipadyate—īrṣyayā āśuropeṇa (=krodhena) naiṣṭhuryeṇa tvaraṇayā anāvṛtyā[12] ālasyena klamathena. Tat eṣṭavyaṃ kimiti etāni jātāni no bhaveyuḥ asmākam iti. Etasya ca sarvasya mūlam anāśuropaḥ (=akrodhaḥ) atvaraṇā ca. Nītyāṃ ye klāntāḥ syuḥ, na te udgaccheyuḥ—sañcalitavyaṃ tu, vartitavyam, etavyaṃ vā. Evameva yaḥ paśyet yuṣmākaṃ, tena vaktavyam—ānṛṇyaṃ paśyata, evaṃ ca evaṃ ca devānāṃpriyasya anuśastiḥ; saḥ mahā-phalaḥ yaḥ tasya saṃpratipādaḥ, mahāpāyā asaṃpratipattiḥ; vipratipādyamāne hi etasmin, nāsti svargasya ārāddhiḥ, no rājārāddhiḥ. Dvyāharaṃ hi asya karmaṇaḥ (phalaṃ?); me kutaḥ mano'tirekaḥ? Sampratipadyamāne tu etasmin, svargam ārādhayiṣyatha, mama ca ānṛṇyam eṣyatha. Iyaṃ ca lipiḥ tiṣya-nakṣatreṇa śrotavyā.

Also between (the days of) Tiṣya, on (suitable) occasions, it should be listened to even by a single person.

By acting thus, you will be able to perform (your duties) rightly.

For this purpose has this rescript been written here—viz. that the City Judges may devote themselves at all times to (this, viz.) 'that men may not be put in fetters without cause or be harassed without cause'.

And for this purpose I shall send out every five years, Mahāmātras who will be not harsh, not fierce, (but) of gentle action, (and who,) bearing this matter in mind, will carry out (this too) as my instructions are.

And from Ujjayinī[13] too, the Prince, for the same purpose, will send out similar persons[14], and will not let three years pass.

Likewise from Takṣaśilā as well.

When those Mahāmātras will go out on tour (for this purpose), they will, without neglecting (their) own work, bear this too in mind (and) and will carry (it) out (thus, viz.) 'as the king's instructions are'.

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*Notes are on pp. 114-115.

Aṃtalā pi ca tisena, khanasi khanasi ekena pi sotaviya. Hevaṃ ca kalaṃtaṃ tuphe caghatha saṃpaṭipādayitave. Etāye aṭhāye iyaṃ lipi likhita hida ena nagala-viyohālakā sasvataṃ samayaṃ yūjevū ti ena janasa akasmā palibodhe va, akasmā palikilese va no siyā ti. Etāye ca aṭhāye hakaṃ mahāmātaṃ paṃcasu paṃcasu vasesu nikhāmayisāmi e akhakhase acaṃḍe sakhinālaṃbhe hosati, etaṃ aṭhaṃ jānitu.......[15] tathā kalaṃti[16] atha mama anusathī ti. Ujenite pi cu kumāle etāye va aṭhāye nikhāmayisati hedisameva vagaṃ, no ca atikāmayisati tiṃni vasāni. Hemeva Takhasilāte pi. Adā a.......[17] te mahāmātā[18] nikhamisaṃti anusayānaṃ, tadā ahāpayitu atane kaṃmaṃ etaṃ pi jānisaṃti, taṃ pi tathā kalaṃti atha lājine anusaṭhī ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Antarā api ca tiṣyaṃ, kṣaṇe kṣaṇe ekena api śrotavyā. Evaṃ ca kurvantaḥ yūyaṃ śakṣyatha saṃpratipādayitum. Etasmai arthāya iyaṃ lipiḥ likhitā iha yena nagara-vyavahārakāḥ śāśvataṃ samayaṃ (etat) yuñjyuḥ iti yena janasya akasmāt paribodhaḥ vā, akasmāt parikleśaḥ vā no syāt iti. Etasmai ca arthāya ahaṃ mahāmātrān pañcasu pañcasu varṣeṣu niṣkrāmayiṣyāmi ye akarkaśāḥ acaṇḍāḥ ślakṣṇārambhāḥ bhaviṣyanti, etam arthaṃ jñātvā....tathā kurvanti yathā mama anuśastiḥ iti. Ujjayinītaḥ api ca kumāraḥ etasmai eva arthāya niṣkrāmayiṣyati īdṛśāneva vargān, no ca atikrāmayiṣyati trīṇi varṣāṇi. Evameva Takṣaśilātaḥ api. Yadā....te mahāmātrāḥ niṣkramiṣyanti anusaṃyānāya, tadā ahitvā ātmanaḥ karmāṇi etat api jñāsyanti, tat api tathā kurvanti yathā rājñaḥ anuśastiḥ iti.

Notes to Separate Kaliṅga Rock Edict 1

1. Jaug. *Devānampiye hevaṃ āhā : Samāpāyaṃ*....See pp. 28-29.
2. Some explain the clause as = 'although (you are) well-provided for (cf. p. 104, note 8). (It happens) in the administration of justice...,' or = 'although (you are) well-practised in the administration etc'.
3. *Tena* is taken by some as = *tasya*, referring to the prisoner (by supplying *prāptam*), but it may refer probably to the Judicial Officer. The exact meaning of this clause is obscure. Some explain *bandhanāntika* (both versions have *badhanaṃtika* and not *baṃdh*°) as '(an order) *cancelling* the imprisonment' and not as '(an order) *resulting in* imprisonment'.
4. Probably the relatives of the prisoners, Jaug. *anye ca vage bahuke.*
5. *Madhya*, though lit. 'middle, impartial', is synonymous with *sam* of *sampratip*° in the next clause, cf. Buddha's 'Middle' Path which too was really meant by him as the 'Right' Path, for in the Dhammacakka-pavattana-Sutta, the Middle Path was explained as the Noble Eightfold Path consisting of 'Right' Belief etc.
6. *Jāta* need not be taken as 'dispositions'; the word occurs also at the beginning of PE 5 and at the end of PE 7, in connection with the enumeration of names of animals, but not in the sense of 'born beings', for Aśoka's usual word for animals is *jīva* or *prāṇāḥ*. *Jāta* just indicates plurality, aggregate or collection.
7. The rendering of this clause is conjectural, Jaug. *nitiyaṃ e yaṃ kilaṃte siy......saṃcalitu uthāyā saṃcalitaviye tu vaṭitaviya pi etaviye pi nītiyaṃ*, the meaning of which is equally obscure; the last word may however be connected with the next clause 'He...who sees...in the administration of justice etc'.
8. The meaning of this clause is very obscure and the rendering is conjectural; could *mano* be = *punaḥ* ?
9. See pp. 13-14.
10. Jaug. *bahuke athi ye eti, eka-munise baṃdh*° etc.
11. Jaug. *nijhapetaviye*, cf. p. 81, note 5.
12. From *ā*√*vṛ*, 'to choose, desire, or prefer', or from *ā*√*vṛt*, 'to go towards'?
13. See pp. 28-29.

14. *Vaga* need not mean 'class' here, for it is probably only a synonym of *jana*, cf. note 4 above.

15. Restore *taṃ pi*, as at the end of the edict ?

16. Present tense for the imperative or optative or future ? cf. p. 105, note 14. Also at the end of the edict. But if not so, then at both places, the reference is not to the inspecting Mahāmātras, but to the City Judges, and the former are to see if the latter are carrying out the king's instructions properly.

17. Restore *aṭhāye etāye* ?

18. Jaug...*vacanika*, probably = rāja-vāc°, see p. 29.

SEPARATE KALIṄGA ROCK EDICT 2

Jaugaḍa version
Date : *Regnal year 13 = c. 256 B.C.*
Subject : *Assurance to the Borderers of Aśoka's goodwill towards them.*

The Beloved of the gods spoke thus :
The Rāja-vācanika-Mahāmātras at Samāpā are to be told[1] :

Whatever I consider (to be good), in (respect of) that I desire that I may carry it out by deeds and may accomplish (it) by (various) means.

And this is considered by me the principal means for (accomplishing) this object, viz. (to give) instructions to you.

All men are my children. As for (my own) children I desire that they may be provided by me with all the welfare and happiness of this world and of the next world, likewise is my desire towards all men.

Perhaps to (my) unconquered Borderers may occur (this thought, viz.) 'What may the king's intentions be towards us ?'.

These alone are my wishes that should be (made) known to the Borderers, viz.—

'The king[2] desires thus, viz.—that they may be without fear in respect of me, and that they may have confidence in me ; and (that they may) obtain only happiness from me, (and) not sorrow'.

And they should (also) understand thus, viz.—'that the king will forgive those who can be forgiven ; and, that they may be induced by me to practise the Dharma ; and, that they may attain (the happiness of) this world and of the next world'.

And for this purpose I am instructing you (that) I may discharge the debts (which I owe to the Borderers) by this

JAUGAḌA TEXT OF SEPARATE KALIṄGA ROCK EDICT 2

Devānaṃpiye hevaṃ āha: Samāpāyaṃ mahamatā lāja-vacanika vataviyā—aṃ kichi dakhāmi hakaṃ, taṃ ichāmi hakaṃ kiṃti kaṃ kamana paṭipātayehaṃ, duvālate ca ālabhehaṃ. Esa ca me mokhiya-mata duvāla etasa athasa—aṃ tuphesu anusathi. Sava-munisā me pajā. Atha pajāye ichāmi kiṃti me saveṇā hita-sukhena yujeyū ti hidalogika-pālalokikeṇa, hevaṃmeva me icha sava-munisesu. Siyā aṃtānaṃ avijitānaṃ—kiṃ-chāṃde su lājā aphesū ti. Etakā vā me icha aṃtesu pāpuneyu—lājā hevaṃ ichati—anuvigina hveyū mamiyāye[3], asvaseyu ca me; sukhaṃmeva ca laheyū mamate, no dukhaṃ. Hevaṃ ca pāpuneyu—khamisati ne lājā e sakiye khamitave; mamaṃ nimitaṃ ca dhaṃmaṃ caleyū ti; hidalogaṃ ca, palalogaṃ ca ālādhayeyū. Etāye ca aṭhāye hakaṃ tupheni anusāsāmi—anane etakena

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ evam āha: Samāpāyāṃ mahāmātrāḥ rāja-vācanikāḥ vaktavyāḥ—yat kiñcit paśyāmi ahaṃ, tasmin icchāmi ahaṃ kimiti tat karmaṇā pratipādayeyaṃ, dvārataḥ ca ārabheya. Etat ca me mukhya-mataṃ dvāram etasya arthasya—yat yuṣmāsu anuśastiḥ. Sarva-manuṣyāḥ me prajāḥ. Yathā prajāsu icchāmi kimiti mayā sarveṇa hita-sukhena yujyeran (prajāḥ) iti aihalaukika-pāralaukikena, evameva me icchā sarva-manuṣyeṣu. Syāt antānām avijitānāṃ—kiṃ-chandaḥ svit rājā asmāsu iti. Etakāḥ eva me icchāḥ anteṣu prāpnuyuḥ—rājā evam icchati—anudvignāḥ bhaveyuḥ mayi, āśvasyuḥ ca mayi; sukhameva ca labheran mattaḥ, no duḥkham. Evaṃ ca prāpnuyuḥ—kṣamiṣyate enān rājā ye śakyāḥ kṣantuṃ; mama nimittaṃ ca dharmaṃ careyuḥ iti; ihalokaṃ ca, paralokaṃ ca ārādhayeyuḥ. Etasmai ca arthāya ahaṃ yuṣmān anuśāsmi—anṛṇaḥ etakena

alone, (viz.) by instructing you and by informing (you) of my intentions, (that is to say, of) what (is) my will and firm determination.

Therefore, in such manner have (your) duties to be performed and they are to be inspired with confidence, that they may feel (thus), viz.—'As (one's) father, so towards us is the king; as he feels for himself, so he feels for us; (and) as (his own) children (are to him), so are we to the king'.

By instructing you and by informing (you) of my intentions, (that is to say, of) what (is) my will and firm determination, I shall be applying myself in complete fullness to (the accomplishment of) this object.

You are able indeed to inspire them with confidence and to secure their welfare and happiness in this world and in the next world.

By acting thus, you will attain heaven as well as discharge the debts (which you owe) to me.

And for this purpose is this rescript written here that the Mahāmātras may devote themselves at all times to inspiring the Borderers with confidence and to inducing them to practise the Dharma.

And this rescript is to be listened to (by all) every four months[4] on (the day of) Tiṣya. And it should be listened to also between (the days of Tiṣya). On (suitable) occasions, (it) should be listened to even by a single person.

And acting thus, you will be able to perform (your duties) rightly.

* Notes are on p. 120.

hakaṃ tupheni anusāsitu, chaṃdaṃ ca veditu—ā mama dhiti paṭiṃnā ca acala. Sa hevaṃ kaṭū kaṃme calitaviye, asvāsaniyā ca te, ena te pāpuneyu—athā pita, hevaṃ ne[5] lājā ti; atha atānaṃ anukaṃpati, hevaṃ apheni anukaṃpati; athā pajā, hevaṃ maye lājine. Tupheni hakaṃ anusāsitu, chāṃdaṃ ca veditu—ā mama dhiti paṭiṃnā cā acala—sakala-desāyutike[6] hosāmī etasi athasi. Alaṃ[7] hi tuphe asvāsanāye, hita-sukhāye ca tesaṃ hidalogika-pālalokikāye. Hevaṃ ca kalaṃtaṃ svagaṃ ca ālādhayisatha, mama ca ānaneyaṃ esatha. Etāye ca athāye iyaṃ lipī likhita hida ena mahāmātā sāsvataṃ samayaṃ[8] yujeyū asvāsanāye ca, dhaṃma-calanāye ca aṃtānaṃ. Iyaṃ ca lipī anucātuṃmāsaṃ sotaviyā tisena. Aṃtalā pi ca sotaviyā. Khane saṃtaṃ ekena pi sotaviyā. Hevaṃ ca kalaṃtaṃ caghatha saṃpaṭipātayitave.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

ahaṃ yuṣmān anuśiṣya, chandaṃ ca vedayitvā—yā mama dhṛtiḥ pratijñā ca acalā. Tat evaṃ kṛtvā karma caritavyam, āśvāsanīyāḥ ca te, yena te prāpnuyuḥ—yathā pitā, evaṃ naḥ rājā iti; yathā ātmānam anukampate, evam asmān anukampate; yathā prajāḥ, evaṃ vayaṃ rājñaḥ. Yuṣmān aham anuśiṣya, chandaṃ ca vedayitvā—yā mama dhṛtiḥ pratijñā ca acalā—sakala-deśāyuktikaḥ bhaviṣyāmi etasmin arthe. Alaṃ hi yūyam āśvāsanāya, hita-sukhāya ca teṣām aihalaukika-pāralaukikāya. Evaṃ ca kurvantaḥ svargaṃ ca ārādhayiṣyatha, mama ca ānṛṇyam eṣyatha. Etasmai ca arthāya iyaṃ lipiḥ likhitā iha yena mahāmātrāḥ śāśvataṃ samayam (etat) yuñjyuḥ āśvāsanāya ca, dharma-caraṇāya ca antānām. Iyaṃ ca lipiḥ anucāturmāsaṃ śrotavyā tiṣyeṇa. Antarā api ca śrotavyā. Kṣaṇe sati ekena api śrotavyā. Evaṃ ca kurvantaḥ śakṣyatha sampratipādayitum.

Notes to Separate Kaliṅga Rock Edict 2

1. Dhau. *Devānampiyasa vacanena Tosaliyaṃ kumāle mahāmātā ca vataviy...* See pp. 17, 28-29. Some think that *lāja-vacanika* does not mean a class of Mahāmātras, but is only a synonym of *devānampiyasa vacanena* of Dhau., where *lāja-vac*⁰ does not occur. But in the preamble to SKRE 1, Jaug. writes *Devānampiye hevaṃ āhā* instead of *Devānampiyasa vacanena* of Dhaulī, and not *lāja-vac*⁰. At the end of SKRE 1 too (see p. 115, note 18), Jaug. uses *vacanika* instead of Dhau. *mahāmātā* although the context at Dhau. does not have *devānampiye hevaṃ āha.*

2. Here and in the subsequent clauses, wherever Jaug. has *lājā*, ⁰*jine*, Dhau. has *devānampiye*, ⁰*piyasa*, see p. 10.

3. This word (Dhau. *mamāye*) as also *me* (both versions) following, are generally taken to be in the instrumental case, but that is doubtful. It is not clear in what case they are, but may be (so also perhaps *hamiyāye* on p. 135) in the locative or dative.

4. At the commencement of the three principal seasons viz. winter, summer and the rains, cf. PE 5, and also see p. 13.

5. Dhau. *aphāka.*

6. *Āyutike*, probably from *ā*√*yuj*, 'to join to, to appoint'. Dhau. ⁰*āvutike*, probably from *ā*√*vṛ* or √*vṛt*, cf. *anāvūti*, p. 114, note 12.

7. Dhau. *paṭibalā.*

8. Both versions write *samaṃ* which may be a mistake for *samayaṃ* (as in both versions of SKRE 1, see p. 113), or = *sammaṃ* = *samyak*, 'fully, properly', or from *samāṃ*, 'years i.e. time' ?

LUMBINĪ PILLAR INSCRIPTION

This inscription (facsimile on p. 5) is found on a pillar in the Nepalese Tarāī, near a shrine now known as Rummindeī (from Lumbinī-dāva, the park outside Kapilavāstu, where Buddha was born), about 1 mile N. of the village Parariya which is about 2 miles N. of Bhagvānpur, the headquarters of the Nepalese *tahsil* of that name, and about 5 miles NE. of Dulhā in the Indian district of Bastī.

The upper portion of the pillar is gone and the top split into two halves. Its present height is about 21 ft.

Hiuen Tsang who visited the spot, saw the pillar broken off in the middle, and heard that it had been struck by lightening.

It was probably surmounted by the usual bell-shaped Aśokan capital, the base whereof, broken into two pieces, was found lying nearby.

Hiuen Tsang further states, that the pillar bore on the top the figure of a horse (?).

LUMBINĪ PILLAR INSCRIPTION

Date : *Regnal year 20 = c. 249 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka's visit to Buddha's birth-place*

Because Buddha, the Śākya sage, was born here, the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, (when) crowned twenty years, himself came and worshipped (here), (and) a stone[1]-made railing was caused to be built (here by him), and a stone-pillar was erected.

Because the Blessed One was born here, the Lumbinī village is made free of taxes,[2] and paying an eighth share[3] (of the produce).

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1. The special mention of stone in connection with the railing and the pillar was made perhaps because these used normally to be of wood, see pp. 40, 44.
2. I.e. those levies imposed in addition to land-revenue.
3. In actual practice, the land-revenue used to be anything from the sixth to the fourth share of the produce although Manu prescribes an eighth share only.

TEXT OF LUMBINĪ PILLAR INSCRIPTION

Devānapiyena Piyadasina lājina vīsati-vasābhisitena atana āgāca mahīyite hida Budhe jāte Sakya-munī ti, silā-vigaḍa-bhīcā kālāpita, silā-thabhe ca usapāpite. Hida bhagavaṃ jāte ti Luṃmini-gāme ubalike kaṭe, aṭha[4]-bhāgiye ca.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā viṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena ātmanā āgatya mahīyitam iha Buddhaḥ jātaḥ Śākya-muniḥ iti, śilā-vikṛta-bhittā kāritā, śilā-stambhaḥ ca utsarpitaḥ. Iha bhagavān jātaḥ iti Lumbinī[5]-grāmaḥ udbalikaḥ kṛtaḥ, āṣṭa-bhāgikaḥ ca.

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4. Some take *aṭha* as *artha*, ('partaking of) riches', as Aśoka is said in the *Divyāvadāna* to have given away 100,000 gold pieces here.

5. Although this word appears in Pali and Sanskrit too as such, could it have been derived from Skt. *rukmiṇī*, 'the pleasing'? Cf. the modern name Rummin°.

NIGĀLĪSĀGAR PILLAR INSCRIPTION

This inscription is found on a broken pillar in the Nepalese Tarāī, on the western bank of a large tank now called Nigālīsāgar, about a mile S. of the village Nīglīvā, 13 miles NW. of Rummindeī (see p. 121) and 7 miles NW. of Piprāvā in the Indian district of Bastī.

The pillar is locally known as *nigālī* or the 'smoking pipe' of Bhīma of the Pāṇḍava brothers of the Mahābhārata. Only two broken pieces of the pillar, without the capital, are now preserved, the upper piece about 15 ft. high and the lower piece containing this inscription about 10 ft. high.

Kanakamuni (Konāka°, Koṇāgamana) is the second of the three mythical precursors of the present *kalpa*, of the historical Gautama Buddha, known as Pratyeka-Buddhas i.e. who obtained Enlightenment but did not preach.

Hiuen Tsang visited this spot. He refers to an inscribed Aśoka pillar which stood in front of a relic stūpa of Buddha Kanakamuni, but no remains of any stūpa have been found near the pillar. He further states that the pillar was about 20 ft. high, surmounted by the figure of a lion, but the combined length of the two existing pieces is more than 20 ft.

Date : *Regnal year 20 (?) = c. 249 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka's visit to the stūpa of Kanakamuni*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, (when) crowned fourteen years, enlarged the stūpa of Buddha Kanakamuni to double (its former size)[1], and (when) crowned (twenty) years, himself came (here), worshipped, (and a stone-pillar) was erected.

TEXT OF NIGĀLĪSĀGAR PILLAR INSCRIPTION

Devānaṃpiyena Piyadasina lājina codasa-vasābhisitena Budhasa Konākamanasa thube dutiyaṃ vaḍhite, ...[2]sābhisitena ca atana āgāca mahīyite ....[3]pāpite.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyeṇa Priyadarśinā rājñā caturdaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena Buddhasya Kanakamuneḥ stūpaḥ dvītiyaṃ vardhitaḥ, (viṃśati-var)ṣābhiṣiktena ca ātmanā āgatya mahīyitaṃ, (śilā-stambhaḥ ca ut)sarpitaḥ.

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1. This shows that the enlargement of existing stūpas, of which a number of instances are known in later times (see pp. 39-40), was undertaken already in Aśoka's time, and also that the cult of the worship of the previous Buddhas was prevalent then too.

2, 3. As it is very likely that Aśoka visited this spot on his way to Lumbinī, these two damaged portions may be restored, as in LPI, thus respectively—*vīsati-va*° and *silā-thabhe ca usa*°.

SCHISM PILLAR EDICT

This inscription is found on pillars at the following places :

Allahabad

The pillar stands now inside the Allahabad Fort. In addition to SPE, this pillar bears several other inscriptions of Aśoka viz. APQGE and PEs 1-6 as also the famous eulogy (*praśasti*) by the poet Hariṣeṇa on Samudragupta (c. 330—380 A.D.), which refers to 'this lofty pillar,' *ayam-ucchṛtaḥ stambhaḥ*.

The Mughal emperor Jahangir too incised on this pillar a short inscription dated 1014 A.H. (=1605 A.D.) recording the names of his ancestors, to make room for which, several lines of Aśoka's PEs 1-6 were entirely destroyed.

In Samudragupta's time, tradition was of course still alive to tell him that the pillar and the inscriptions it bore, were Aśoka's although the contents of the latter might have no longer been known.

In Jahangir's time, the origin of the pillar and the authorship and contents of the inscriptions had no doubt been forgotten, but it is probable that tradition still remembered that the inscriptions were by ancient kings, which prompted the proud Mughal to add his own ancestry thereto.

This pillar thus is a unique monument of Indian history, bearing as it does the records of three great rulers of India during a period of about two thousand years.

The pillar further bears between the lines of PEs 1-6, engravings in Nāgarī characters, which are merely a series of unconnected scribblings of various dates, cut most likely by the attendants on the pillar as a pretext for exacting a few rupees from visitors and pilgrims to Prayāga, the sacred Gaṅgā-Yamunā confluence. One of these scribblings records the name of Akbar's famous courtier, Raja Birbal, and in corrupt Sanskrit, that his 'journey (to the spot) might bear fruit.' Local legend called the pillar a *gadā* or club of Bhīmasena, the Pāṇḍava.

The top of the pillar is lost. Its present height is about 35 ft. The circular abacus still remains, with its graceful scroll of alternate lotus and honeysuckle, resting on a beaded astragalus suggesting Greek influence.

In Jahangir's time, the pillar was crowned by a globe, surmounted by a cone, as described and sketched by Padre Tieffenthaler about the middle of the 18th century. In 1838 the pillar was provided by the British authorities with a newly designed lion capital of poor workmanship.

Because of the mention of Kosaṃbī (Kauśāmbī, see p. 28) in this version of the edict, it was surmised by some that the pillar was originally set up at Kauśāmbī by Aśoka, and that it was removed to Allahabad by Firoz Shah who transported to Delhi two Aśoka pillars from other places (see *Intro.* to the section on the PEs, p. 140). That is why this pillar is called by some as the Allahabad-Kauśāmbī pillar. Some again think that while Delhi was the capital of Firoz Shah, Allahabad was founded or refounded two centuries later by Akbar who or his son Jahangir might have removed the pillar from Kauśāmbī.

None of these surmises need be correct. It may be that in Kauśāmbī itself, a very important centre at the time, Aśoka had set up a pillar, now lost, on which was engraved the original version of this edict, and a copy of it was also engraved on this pillar—just as a copy of the Pāṭaliputra version of this edict was engraved on the Sārnāth pillar (p. 128)—which stood just where it was found, viz. near the sacred Gaṅgā-Yamunā confluence where pilgrims gathered in large numbers. The scribblings of Akbar's time are cut in vertically and not horizontally on the pillar, which shows that the pillar lay flat on the ground at the time. If Firoz Shah or Akbar or Jahangir had brought the pillar there from elsewhere, they would have re-erected it in an upright position instead of leaving it lying fallen on the ground.

Sanchi

This well-known Buddhist shrine lies within a mile of the Railway station of the same name, between Bhopal (<Bhojapāla) and Bhīlsā (<Bhailasvāmin, a name of Śiva), in Madhya Bharat.

The pillar now broken, is only a fragment of a long shaft. Near it was found a beautiful broken capital crowned by four lions (an imitation of the famous Sārnath capital, see photos facing pp. 44 and 45), now in the local museum close by, which no doubt originally surmounted the pillar. The shaft of the pillar was further broken by a local landlord who wanted to use it as a roller for a sugarcane press.

The pillar stands at the south gate of the Great Stūpa of Sanchi. The present form of this stūpa is an enlargement of the original stūpa built by Aśoka (see pp. 32, 39). Besides the Great Stūpa, Sanchi had many other stūpas, some of which contained the body-relics of famous Buddhist saints.

Sārnāth

This famous Buddhist shrine lies about 6 miles N. of Banaras and has now a Rly. station of the same name close by.

It was in the Deer Park (*mṛga-dāva*) here that Buddha preached his first sermon to 'turn the Wheel of the Law', where a number of structures came to be built through the subsequent centuries, the foundations only whereof now remain. The Dhāmek (<Dharmacakra) stūpa, yet standing, is a structure not older than the 4th cent. A.D.

The famous lion capital of this pillar (photo facing p. 44) lay broken near it, now seen in the local museum. For its sculptural qualities, see pp. 41-44, 46.

Hiuen Tsang records that he saw on the site of the Mṛga-dāva, a stone pillar standing in front of a stūpa built by Aśoka, and he gives the height of this pillar as about 70 ft. But the full height of the present pillar, as it originally stood intact, has been calculated to have been about 37 ft. above ground. Was Hiuen Tsang mistaken (cf. the discrepancy between his estimate and the present height of the Nigālīsāgar pillar, p. 124), or was he speaking of another pillar, now lost ?

This version of the edict seems to refer to Pāṭaliputra. It was probably a copy of the version engraved on a pillar in Pāṭaliputra, now lost. Sārnāth might have been included at that time in the home province of Magadha and administered from Pāṭaliputra.

The stump of the pillar bears two other short inscriptions of a later date, viz. (*i*) an inscription of a king named Aśvaghoṣa, which is

engraved in continuation of the last line of Aśoka's edict, and *(ii)* a Buddhist inscription in early Gupta characters, engraved above the epigraph of Aśvaghoṣa.

It is probable that this edict was issued to state officials after the Third Buddhist Council (see p. 21), for taking effective steps for stamping out schismatic activities from the Buddhist Order. See pp. 31 and 35. Aśoka took part in the proceedings of the Council probably as a monk and not as a lay disciple, for the laity had no place in the deliberations of the clerics. But dressed though he might have been as a monk, he acted as the ruler and king.

The reason why this edict is not found on all the other extant pillars of Aśoka, is probably that it was engraved only at places where large vihāras or monastic establishments existed, where study of the Buddhist scriptures was also conducted. It is probable that pillars, now no more, at several other monastic centres also bore versions of this edict.

SCHISM PILLAR EDICT

Allahabad version
Date : *Not known ; see pp. 21-22*
Subject : *Punishment for schism in the Buddhist Order*

The Beloved of the gods commands :
The Mahāmātras at Kauśāmbī (are to be told thus :)

(Whoever splits the Saṃgha, now) made united, is not to be admitted into the Saṃgha.

(Whoever) monk or nun breaks the Saṃgha, is to be made to put on white clothes[1] and is to be made to reside in a non-residence[2].

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1. Of a non-cleric, i.e. of the laity ; i.e. they were to be divested of monastic garbs.
2. I.e. they were to be expelled from the vihāra.
3. Sār. *pāṭa....* ; probably 'at Pāṭaliputra.'
4. Sār. *Ye kena pi saṃghe bhetave.....*
5. Sān. *(sa)mage kaṭe bhikhūnaṃ cā bhikhuninaṃ cā ti puta-papotike caṃdama-sūriyike,*—'(the Saṃgha) of monks and nuns, (now) made united (to endure) till (my) sons and great-grandsons (live and) till the moon and the sun (exist)'.
6. Sān. *ye* ; Sār. *e cuṃ kho.*
7. After the above, Sān. adds—**Ichā hi me kiṃti saṃghe samage cila-thitike siyā ti**—'It is my desire that the Saṃgha, (now) made united, may endure long', in place of which, Sār. has—**Hevaṃ iyaṃ sāsane bhikhu-saṃghasi ca bhikhuni-saṃghasi ca viṃnapayitaviye**—'Thus is this edict to be made known to the congregation of monks and of nuns'. Then Sār. has this 'postscript' (see p. 8)—**Hevaṃ devānaṃpiye āhā : hedisā ca ikā lipi**

ALLAHABAD TEXT OF SCHISM PILLAR EDICT

Devānaṃpiye ānapayati : Kosaṃbiyaṃ[3] mahāmāt.. [4].......samage kaṭe[5], saṃghasi no lahiye. [6].......saṃghaṃ bhākhati bhikhu vā bhikhuni vā, se pi cā odātāni dusāni sanaṃdhāpayitu anāvāsasi āvāsayiye[7].

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ ājñāpayati : Kauśāmbyāṃ mahāmātrāḥ ....samagraṃ kṛtaṃ, saṃghe no labhyaḥ.......saṃghaṃ bhaṃkṣyati bhikṣuḥ vā bhikṣukī vā, saḥ api ca avadātāni dūṣyāṇi saṃnāhya anāvāse āvāsyaḥ.

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tuphākaṃtikaṃ huvāti (*or* huvā ti ?) **saṃsalanasi nikhitā, ikaṃ ca lipiṃ hedisameva upāsakānaṃtikaṃ nikhipātha. Te pi ca upāsakā anuposathaṃ yāvu etameva sāsanaṃ visvaṃsayitave. Anuposathaṃ ca dhuvāye ikike mahāmāte posathāye yāti, etameva sāsanaṃ visvaṃsayitave, ājānitave ca. Āvate ca tuphākaṃ āhāle, savata vivāsayātha tuphe etena viyaṃjanena. Hemeva savesu koṭa-viṣavesu etena viyaṃjanena vivāsāpayāthā.**—'The Beloved of the gods spoke thus : And a rescript like this, (i.e. a copy of it), in order that it may be with you, is deposited in the *saṃsaraṇa* (see below), and cause a(nother) rescript just like this to be deposited with the lay worshippers. And let those lay worshippers go on every fast-day, in order to be inspired with confidence in this very edict. And invariably on every fast-day, a Mahāmātra shall go (cf. p. 105, note 14 and p. 115, note 16) by turn to the fast-day (service), in order to be inspired with confidence in this very edict and to know it. And as far as your district (extends), despatch ye everywhere (messengers to proclaim this edict) in these (very) words (cf. pp. 55-56, and p. 68, note 2). Likewise, cause it to be despatched in these (very) words to all the fort-territories' (perhaps outlying areas, held by military posts).

Saṃsaraṇa may mean the (waiting) room near the entrance (to a vihāra), or the assembly-hall, or where several roads meet. As for the proclamation of the edict in outlying fort-areas, cf. last para on p. 57.

BAIRĀṬ BUDDHIST TEXTS EDICT

This inscription, engraved on an irregularly shaped, hard grey granite block measuring about 2 ft. × 2 ft. × 1½ ft., was found on a hill, about one mile SW. of the town of Bairāṭ (see p. 51).

It came to be wrongly called the Bhābrū Edict because Captain Burt who discovered the inscription in 1840, had stated in his report that Bairāṭ, its find-place, was 6 *kos* distance from Bhābrū (which he wrongly called Bhābrā) where he was camping at the time. But because Bairāṭ is associated with a version of MRE, the mistake has been allowed to continue.

The block on which the inscription is engraved, is now in the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, for which reason, some call it the Calcutta-Bairāṭ Rock Inscription.

This inscription is a unique historical record, being the message of a monarch to the church to which he adhered, in fact a command, although couched in the politest language.

Copies of this edict, like those of SPE, were probably engraved at other monastic centres too.

For the omission of the title 'Beloved of the gods' in this inscription, see p. 12, and for the use of the term 'Magadhan', see p. 13.

Scholars differ about the identification of the Buddhist texts referred to by Aśoka in this edict.

From the way Aśoka refers to them, it may be inferred that already in his time, a considerable body of Buddha's sayings etc had been put into a collected form, probably also reduced to writing.

The texts mentioned by Aśoka may be identified probably with the following sections of the Pali Canon :

Vinayasamukasa = 'Extracts from the Vinaya' = Passage 2 of the Atthavasavagga in the Aṅguttara Nikāya ;

Aliyavasāni = 'The Noble-Ways of Life'—in the Saṅgīti-suttanta and Dasuttara-suttanta in the Dīgha Nikāya ;

Anāgatabhayāni = 'Fears to Come'—in the Aṅguttara Nikāya ;

Munigāthā = 'Stanzas on a Sage' = Munisutta in the Suttanipāta ;

Moneyasūta = 'Discourse on the Saintly State' = Moneyyasutta in the Aṅguttara Nikāya ;

Upatisapasina = 'The Question of Upatiṣya (Sāriputra)' = Sāriputtasutta in the Suttanipāta ;

Lāghulovāda = 'Exhortation to Rāhula (Buddha's son)' = Rāhulovāda in the Majjhima Nikāya.

It will be noticed that of the seven texts mentioned, of one only—the last-named *Rāhulāvavāda*, in which Buddha exhorted his monk-son on the evils of deliberately spoken falsehood—Aśoka mentions not only the name but also indicates its subject-matter, perhaps for the purpose of drawing special attention to it. The reason for it was perhaps that Aśoka had realised from his experience of the Third Council that many members of the Order were deliberate liars.

Some think that the word *paliyāya* = Pali *pariyāya*, Sansk. *paryāya*, '(sacred) formula or text', used twice in this inscription, may be the parent of the word 'Pāli', the etymology of which has remained obscure so far.

BAIRĀṬ BUDDHIST TEXTS EDICT

Date : *Not known ; see p. 22*
Subject : *Buddhist Texts to be specially studied by all members of the Order*

King Priyadarśin, the Magadhan, having saluted the Saṃgha, said :

(I wish you) good health and happy living.

It is known to you, Sirs, how great are my reverence for and faith in Buddha, the Dharma (and) the Saṃgha.

Whatever, Sirs, has been spoken by the Blessed Buddha, all that is well spoken indeed.

And, Sirs, what would appear to me as 'Thus will the true Dharma be of long duration'—that I may be permitted to speak of.

These Dharma texts, Sirs, (viz.)—the Vínaya-samutkarṣa, the Ārya-vāsas, the Anāgata-bhayas, the Muni-gāthā, the Mauneya-sūtra, the Upatiṣya-praśna, and the Rāhulāva-vāda which was spoken by the Blessed Buddha concerning false-speech,—these Dharma-texts, Sirs, I desire that most (of the) monks and nuns may constantly listen to and remember.

Likewise, the laymen and the laywomen too.

For this (purpose), Sirs, I am causing this to be written, viz. that they[1] may know my intention.

1. I.e. 'you', third person used honorifically for the second.

TEXT OF BAIRĀṬ BUDDHIST TEXTS EDICT

Priyadasi lājā Māgadhe saṃghaṃ abhivādetūnaṃ āhā: apābādhataṃ ca phāsu-vihālataṃ cā. Vidite ve bhaṃte āvatake hamā Budhasi dhaṃmasi saṃghasī ti gālave caṃ prasāde ca. E keci bhaṃte bhagavatā Budhena bhāsite, sarve se subhāsite vā. E cu kho bhaṃte hamiyāye[2] diseyā—hevaṃ sadhaṃme cila-ṭhitīke hosatī ti—alahāmi hakaṃ taṃ vātave. Imāni bhaṃte dhaṃma-paliyāyāni—Vinaya-samukase, Aliya-vasāṇi, Anāgata-bhayāni, Muni-gāthā, Moneya-sūte, Upatisa-pasine, e cā Lāghulovāde musā-vādaṃ adhigicya bhagavatā Budhena bhāsite—etāni bhaṃte dhaṃma-paliyāyāni ichāmi kiṃti bahuke bhikhu-pāye cā bhikhuniye cā abhikhinaṃ suneyu cā upadhālayeyū cā. Hevaṃmevā upāsakā cā, upāsikā cā. Etenā bhaṃte imaṃ likhāpayāmi abhipretaṃ me jānaṃtū ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Priyadarśī rājā Māgadhaḥ saṃgham abhivādya āha: Alpābādhatāṃ ca sparśa(=sukha)-vihāratāṃ ca. Viditaṃ vaḥ bhadantāḥ yāvatkaṃ mama Buddhe dharme saṃghe iti gauravaṃ ca prasādaḥ ca. Yat kiñcit bhadantāḥ bhagavatā Buddhena bhāṣitaṃ, sarvaṃ tat subhāṣitam eva. Yat ca khalu bhadantāḥ mayā dṛśyeta—evaṃ sad-dharmaḥ cira-sthitikaḥ bhaviṣyati iti—arhāmi ahaṃ tat vaktum. Ime bhadantāḥ dharma-paryāyāḥ—Vinaya-samutkarṣaḥ, Ārya-vāsāḥ, Anāgata-bhayāni, Muni-gāthā, Mauneya-sūtram, Upatiṣya-praśnaḥ, yaḥ ca Rāhulāvavādaḥ mṛṣā-vādam adhikṛtya bhagavatā Buddhena bhāṣitaḥ—etān bhadantāḥ dharma-paryāyān icchāmi kimiti bahukaḥ bhikṣu-prāyaḥ ca bhikṣukyaḥ ca abhīkṣṇaṃ śṛṇuyuḥ ca upadhārayeyuḥ ca. Evameva upāsakāḥ ca upāsikāḥ ca. Etena bhadantāḥ idaṃ lekhayāmi, abhipretaṃ me jānantu iti.

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2. See p. 120, note 3.

ALLAHABAD PILLAR QUEEN'S GIFTS EDICT

This inscription is found on the Allahabad Pillar (see p. 126).

It was (wrongly) called the Queen's (Pillar) Edict as the inscription was taken as conveying the queen's own wishes.

Although this edict is addressed to 'the Mahāmātras everywhere,' it is found nowhere else. One would have expected it on some of the pillars at least, which have the PEs, if not SPE.

Two reasons may be adduced for the non-occurrence of this inscription at any other place—

(*i*) The charitable queen who was probably very modest and did not seek publicity, got Aśoka to stop its being engraved at other places as soon as she came to know that it was being engraved ;

(*ii*) The edict was not at all meant to be engraved. The *Dharmalipis* were certainly not the only orders of Aśoka which were transmitted to his officers from time to time. Many of his orders on various administrative matters, with the common preamble 'By the word of the Beloved of the gods, the Mahāmātras at..... are to be told thus', used to be sent to different places, and this order was just one of the kind, requiring the registration of the queen's gifts under an amplified name. But because it related to *public gifts and charities on a large scale* by a queen (who was probably a Buddhist, see pp. 31-33), the authorities at Kauśāmbī (or at the Prayāga confluence) took it as a *Dharmalipi* meant for engraving—a mistake which was either not made by other local authorities or was corrected before the edict was engraved elsewhere.

Who the 'second queen' was is not known. Why her name was to be recorded in an amplified form in state registers too is a mystery. Was it because she had just given birth to a son named Tīvara ? Or because she wanted, out of modesty, to be named in the official registers primarily as a private individual and only secondarily as a queen ? Or was it as a mark of his appreciation of her large charities that Aśoka desired her name to be mentioned in fuller form ?

One of the meanings of the word *tivara*, as given in Sansk. lexicons, is 'the ocean'. Was the second queen—if she was the 'Devī' of Vidiśā, the mother of Mahendra and Saṅghamitrā—given the name of 'mother of the ocean' because her son and daughter had gone abroad by sea on a noble mission ?

According to the Ceylonese Mahāvaṃsa, Asandhimittā was another name of queen 'Devī', the mother of Mahendra and Saṅghamitrā, who is described as Aśoka's *second wife*. Buddhaghoṣa narrates a story in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī about Asandhimittā, described as a queen, 'Devī', though not the chief queen, of Aśoka, in which she is associated with a bird called Karavikā (or Kalaviṅkā) belonging to the Himalayan region and possessing an *exceedingly sweet voice*.

These lend support to (*i*) the identification of the Vidiśā queen 'Devī' as the 'second queen Kāruvākī', (*ii*) the meaning of Kāruvākī being 'one with a very sweet speech or voice', and also perhaps to (*iii*) her being descended from the Śākyas of Kapilavāstu (see bottom of p. 32), who lived at the foot of the Himalayas.

Date : *Not known ; see pp. 21-22*
Subject : *Registration of the Second Queen's gifts in state documents under an amplified name*

By the word of the Beloved of the gods, the Mahāmātras everywhere are to be told :

The gifts here of the Second Queen, (viz.) mango-groves, or parks, or alms-houses, or anything else that is registered[1] (as a gift) of that Queen, all that (are now to be registered) in this manner, (viz.) 'Of the Second Queen Kāruvākī[2], the mother of Tīvara[3]'.

1. Cf. p. 68, note 2.
2. Some think this is a family-name, probably connected with the Vedic *gotra* of the Kārus. Others connect it with the modern caste of the Karwas. But was it perhaps a personal name meaning 'of artistic speech' ?
3. This rather uncommon name occurs as that of a king of Kośala in an inscription of c. 8th cent. A.D.

TEXT OF ALLAHABAD PILLAR QUEEN'S GIFTS EDICT

Devānaṃpiyaṣā vacanenā savata mahamatā vataviyā : e hetā dutiyāye devīye dāne—aṃbā-vaḍikā vā, ālame va, dāna-gahe va, e vā pi aṃne kīchi ganīyati tāye deviye—ṣe nāni[4] hevaṃ ...na...[5] dutīyāye deviye ti, Tīvala-mātu Kāluvākiye.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyasya vacanena sarvatra mahāmātrāḥ vaktavyāḥ : yāni atra dvitīyāyāḥ devyāḥ dānāni—āmra-vāṭikā vā, ārāmaḥ vā, dāna-gṛhaṃ vā, yat vā api anyat kiñcit gaṇyate tasyāḥ devyāḥ—tāni enāni (=sarvāṇi) evaṃ (gaṇayitavyāni ?)—dvitīyāyāḥ devyāḥ iti, Tīvara-mātuḥ Kāruvācaḥ.

4. Cf. p. 105, note 17.
5. Restore *ganitaviye* or *ganayit°* ?

SEVEN PILLAR EDICTS

These inscriptions are engraved on pillars found at the following places, all in North India. All these pillars bear PEs 1-6, and the Delhi-Toprā pillar alone bears PE 7.

Allahabad

See p. 126.

Delhi-Toprā

This pillar, about 43 ft. in height, its capital lost, now stands on the roof of the three-storeyed citadel (koṭlā) of Sultan Firoz Shah (1351-1388 A.D.), outside the 'Delhi Gate', NE. of New Delhi.

Shams-i-Sirāj, the historian of Firoz Shah, narrates that the pillar stood originally at Toprā (in the Sivālik hills, between Ambala and Sirsava, 18 miles S. of Sadhora and 22 miles SW. of Khizrabad), and was known as 'Bhīmasena's pillar' and 'golden pillar'; Sultan Firoz had it carried on a truck with 42 wheels to the bank of the Yamunā, whence it was floated down the river to Delhi on a number of large boats tied together, and erected on the top of his palace.

The pillar bears some pilgrims' and travellers' scribblings, as also three short dated inscriptions of the Cāhamāna Visaladeva of Sākambarī (12th cent. A.D.), son of Ānnalladeva.

Delhi-Meerut

This pillar, the stump only, now stands on the 'Ridge', NW. of New Delhi. It too was brought to Delhi by Sultan Firoz, says his historian named above, from near the town of Meerut in U.P., and erected on a hill in the Sultan's 'hunting palace,' situated on the 'Ridge'.

Europeans' accounts from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century say that the pillar was broken into five pieces owing to the blowing up of a gunpowder magazine nearby. The broken pieces have now been re-assembled and re-erected.

Lauḍiyā-Ararāj and *Lauḍiyā-Nandangarh*

These two pillars stand near two villages of the same name of Lauḍiyā (derived from the pillars themselves, locally regarded as *liṅgas*).

Both the villages are in the Champaran Dist. of Bihar, the first 20 miles NW. of Kesariya and the second 15 miles NNW. of Betiya.

The present names of the sites have been given in order to distinguish the two different villages of Lauḍiyā—the first combined with Ararāj, the name of a neighbouring temple of Śiva, and the second with a ruined fort in the vicinity.

The capital of the first pillar is gone; that of the second pillar (see photo facing p. 47) is bell-shaped, with a circular abacus supporting the figure of a lion facing the north, the abacus being ornamented with a row of pecking geese.

The pillars are about 37 ft. and 33 ft. high respectively.

The second pillar bears a short inscription recording the name of the emperor Aurangzeb, as also some yet later scribblings.

Rampūrvā

In the Champaran Dist. of Bihar, about 33 miles N. of Betiya.

This pillar had a lion capital, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (see photo facing p. 45). The bell and the circular abacus with the geese-and-flower decoration are still in good condition. The pillar lay fallen on the ground when first discovered, but has now been re-erected some 200 yards away from its former place. Height about 45 ft.

The Lauḍiyā-Ararāj, Lauḍiyā-Nandangarh and Rāmpūrvā pillars were set up, some think, along Aśoka's pilgrimage route from Pāṭaliputra to Lumbinī.

The texts of the various versions of the PEs are practically identical, and engraver's errors too are much less frequent (see p. 8). The deepening of Aśoka's thoughts evinced in these edicts, coming as they did about fifteen years after the REs, is also noticeable.

Why was PE 7 not engraved on any pillar except the Delhi-Toprā ? It is to be noted that the Toprā pillar was the westernmost of all the extant PE-bearing pillars and it was the nearest from North-West India.

Tradition records that Aśoka died in Taxila which might mean either the city or the Province. It may therefore be perhaps surmised that shortly after the engraving of this edict on the Toprā pillar, Aśoka died in Taxila, whereafter it was not considered necessary by his successors to continue with the 'whim' of the dead monarch. Or perhaps the general political turmoil following Aśoka's death that disrupted the Maurya empire, put an abrupt end to all Aśokan traditions. PE 7 is the longest of the extant Aśokan records and in its review of his life-long activities, it reads almost like his last will and testament. Perhaps he felt while composing it that he might not live much longer ; he might have dictated it on his sick-bed, for, unlike all his other inscriptions, it repeats the preamble 'The Beloved of the gods......spoke thus' so many times as to suggest that the different sections were dictated probably at intervals during an illness.

According to Purāṇic accounts Aśoka reigned for 36 years while according to Ceylonese accounts he reigned for 37 years. But if he really died shortly after PE7, he reigned for 27 years. It may be that it pleased the Buddhists to allot to their favourite royal patron a reign that exceeded the actual period by the convenient round number of ten.

The texts adopted of all the PEs in the following pages, are of the Delhi-Toprā version.

PILLAR EDICT 1

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *Exhortation on the practice of Dharma*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by me, (when I am) crowned twenty-six years.

(Happiness) in this (world) and in the next (world) is difficult to secure fully without a great desire for the Dharma, great circumspection, great respectfulness, great fear (of sin, and) great energy.

But by my instructions, this regard for the Dharma and desire for the Dharma have indeed been promoted day by day and will increase still more.

And my officers[1] too, (of) high, low[2] and middle (rank), are following and carrying out (my instructions) properly and are able to inspire others.

And likewise (are doing) the Mahāmātras for the Borderers[2] too.

These indeed are (my) instructions, viz. to protect according to the Dharma, to dispose according to the Dharma, to make (others) happy according to the Dharma, (and) to guard (others) according to the Dharma.

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1. See p. 29.
2. The derivation of *gevaya* is unknown, and the meaning is conjectured from 'high' and 'middle'.

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 1

Devānampiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ āhā: saḍuvīsati-vasa-abhisitena me iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi likhāpitā. Hidata-pālate dusaṃpaṭipādaye aṃnata agāyā dhaṃma-kāmatāyā, agāya palīkhāyā, agāya susūsāyā, agena bhayenā, agena usāhenā. Esa cu kho mama anusathiyā dhaṃmāpekhā dhaṃma-kāmatā cā suve suve vaḍhitā, vaḍhīsati cevā. Pulisā pi ca me ukasā cā, gevayā cā, majhimā cā anuvidhīyaṃtī saṃpaṭipādayaṃti cā, alaṃ ca palaṃ[3] samādapayitave. Hemevā aṃta-mahāmātā pi. Esa hi vidhi—yā iyaṃ dhaṃmena pālanā, dhaṃmena vidhāne, dhaṃmena sukhiyanā, dhaṃmena gotī ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: ṣaḍviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā. Aihatra-pāratraṃ duḥsampratipādyam anytra agrāyāḥ dharma-kāmatāyāḥ, agrāyāḥ parīkṣāyāḥ, agrāyāḥ śuśrūṣāyāḥ, agrāt bhayāt, agrāt utsāhāt. Eṣā tu khalu mama anuśastyā dharmāpekṣā dharma-kāmatā ca śvaḥ śvaḥ vardhitā, vardhiṣyate caiva. Puruṣāḥ api ca me utkarṣāḥ ca, ... ca, madhyamāḥ ca anuvidadhati sampratipādayanti ca, alaṃ ca paraṃ samādāpayitum. Evameva anta-mahāmātrāḥ api. Eṣā hi vidhiḥ—yat idaṃ dharmeṇa pālanaṃ, dharmeṇa vidhānaṃ, dharmeṇa sukhīkaraṇaṃ, dharmeṇa guptiḥ iti.

3. Some would read *ca palaṃ* as *capalam*, 'the fickle-minded'.

PILLAR EDICT 2

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *What constitutes the practice of Dharma*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

(The practice of) Dharma is commendable—but what constitutes the Dharma ?

(These constitute the Dharma, viz.)—little sin, many good deeds, mercifulness, charity, truthfulness, (and) purity.

The gift of the eye[1] too, of many kinds, has been bestowed by me.

On bipeds and quadrupeds, on birds and aquatic animals, various benefits have been conferred by me, (even) as far as the grant of life[2].

And many other good deeds too have been performed by me.

For this purpose has this Dharma-rescript been caused to be written by me, (viz.) that (the people) may follow (it) as instructed and that (it) may be of long duration.

And he who will thus follow it properly, will perform a good deed.

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1. The exact meaning of 'eye' here is uncertain ; may be 'the eye of knowledge or wisdom'. Some take it as meaning remission of the punishment of blinding.
2. Cf. RE 1 and PE 5.

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 2

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ āhā: dhaṃme sādhū—kiyaṃ cu dhaṃme ti? Apāsinave bahu-kayāne dayā dāne sace socaye. Cakhu-dāne pi me bahu-vidhe diṃne. Dupada-catupadesu pakhi-vālicalesu vividhe me anugahe kaṭe, ā pāna-dākhināye. Aṃnāni pi ca me bahūni kayānāni kaṭāni. Etāye me aṭhāye iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi likhāpitā—hevaṃ anupaṭipajaṃtu, cilaṃ-thitikā ca hotū ti. Ye ca hevaṃ saṃpaṭipajīsati, se sukaṭaṃ kachatī ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: dharmaḥ sādhuḥ—kiyān tu dharmaḥ iti? Alpāsnavaḥ[3] bahu-kalyāṇaṃ dayā dānaṃ satyaṃ śaucam. Cakṣur-dānam api mayā bahu-vidhaṃ dattam. Dvipada-catuṣpadeṣu pakṣi-vāricareṣu vividhaḥ mayā anugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ, ā prāṇa-dākṣiṇyāt. Anyāni api ca mayā bahūni kalyāṇāni kṛtāni. Etasmai mayā arthāya iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā—evam anupratipadyantāṃ (janāḥ), cira-sthitikā ca bhavatu iti. Yaḥ ca evaṃ sampratipatsyate, saḥ sukṛtaṃ kariṣyati iti.

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3. From $\bar{a}\sqrt{snu}$, cf. p. 91, note 5.

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *Exhortation on vigilance against sin*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

(People) regard (their) virtuous deeds only (thus), viz.—'This virtuous deed has been performed by me'.

But they do not regard (their) evil deeds (thus), viz.—'This evil deed has been performed by me,' or 'This is called sin.'

This however, is difficult indeed to understand.

But one should indeed regard it thus—'These are called the ways to sin, viz.—fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride (and) envy ; let me be not ruined by (these) very causes.'

(And) this ought to be more (specially) regarded, (viz.)—'This (conduces) to my (happiness) here (in this world), whereas this (conduces) to my (happiness) in the next (world).'[1]

1. Cf. the distinction recommended to be made in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad between *śreyas*, 'the good,' and *preyas*, 'the agreeable'.

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 3

Devānampiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ ahā: kayānaṃmeva dekhati —iyaṃ me kayāne kaṭe ti. No mina pāpaṃ dekhati—iyaṃ me pāpe kaṭe ti, iyaṃ vā āsinave nāmā ti. Dupaṭivekhe cu kho esā. Hevaṃ cu kho esa dekhiye—imāni āsinava-gāmīni nāma, atha—caṃḍiye niṭhūliye kodhe māne isyā; kālanena va hakaṃ mā palibhasayisaṃ. Esa bāḍha dekhiye—iyaṃ me hidatikāye, iyaṃ mana me pālatikāye.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: kalyāṇameva paśyati (janaḥ)—idaṃ mayā kalyāṇaṃ kṛtam iti. Na punaḥ[2] pāpaṃ paśyati—idaṃ mayā pāpaṃ kṛtam iti, ayaṃ vā āsnavaḥ[3] nāma iti. Duṣpratiṿīkṣyaṃ tu khalu etat. Evaṃ tu khalu etat paśyet—imāni āsnava-gāmīni nāma, yathā—cāṇḍyaṃ naiṣṭhuryaṃ krodhaḥ mānaḥ īrṣyā; (eṣāṃ) kāraṇena eva ahaṃ mā paribhraśyeyam. Etat bāḍhaṃ paśyet—idaṃ me aihatrikāya, idaṃ punaḥ[4] me pāratrikāya.

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2. Some take *no mina* as = *na manāk*, 'not in the least.' Cf. also *mano* on p. 111, line 14.
3. See p. 147, note 3.
4. Cf. note 2 above. Some would read *iyaṃmana* = *idam anyat*, 'this other.'

PILLAR EDICT 4

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *The duties of the Rajjukas*[1]

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by me, (when) crowned twenty-six years.

My Rajjukas are occupied among the people, among many hundred thousands of men.

(The hearing of) petitions[2] or (the conduct of) trials by them has been made independent by me, in order that the Rajjukas may discharge (their) duties confidently (and) fearlessly, (and) may confer welfare and happiness on the rural people and benefit (them).

They should bear in mind what causes happiness or pain (to the rural people) and being (themselves) devoted to the Dharma, should exhort the rural people, in order that they (the rural people) may attain (happiness) in this world and in the next world.

The Rajjukas again are to fit themselves for conforming to my instructions (and) they will conform to the instructions of the (special) officers also, who are aware of my intentions.

And they (the special officers) too will exhort them (the Rajjukas), in order that the Rajjukas may be able to please me.

Just as, having entrusted one's child to an expert nurse, one feels confident (thinking) 'the expert nurse will be able to keep my child well,' likewise have the Rajjukas been made (responsible) by me for the welfare and happiness of the rural people.

That they may discharge (their) duties unperturbed, fearlessly and confidently,—for this (reason) has (the hearing of)

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 4

Devānampiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ āhā: saḍuvīsati-vasa-abhisitena me iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi likhāpitā. Lajūkā me bahūsu pāna-sata-sahasesu janasi āyatā. Tesaṃ ye abhihāle vā, daṃḍe vā, ata-patiye me kaṭe kiṃti lajūkā asvatha abhītā kaṃmāni pavatayevū, janasa jānapadasā hita-sukhaṃ upadahevū, anugahinevu cā. Sukhīyana-dukhīyanaṃ jānisaṃti, dhaṃma-yutena ca viyovadisaṃti janaṃ jānapadaṃ kiṃti hidataṃ ca, pālataṃ ca ālādhayevū ti. Lajūkā pi laghaṃti[3] paṭicalitave maṃ, pulisāni pi me chaṃdaṃnāni paṭicalisaṃti. Te pi ca kāni viyovadisaṃti yena maṃ lajūkā caghaṃti ālādhayitave. Athā hi pajaṃ viyatāye dhātiye nisijitu asvathe hoti—viyata dhāti caghati me pajaṃ sukhaṃ palihaṭave—hevaṃ mamā lajūkā kaṭā jānapadasa hita-sukhāye. Yena ete abhītā asvatha saṃtaṃ avimanā kaṃmāni

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: saḍviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā. Rajjukāḥ me bahuṣu prāṇa-śata-sahasreṣu janeṣu āyatāḥ. Teṣāṃ yaḥ abhihāraḥ vā, daṇḍaḥ vā, ātma-patikaḥ mayā kṛtaḥ kimiti rajjukāḥ āśvastāḥ abhītāḥ karmāṇi pravartayeyuḥ, janasya jānapadasya hita-sukham upadadhyuḥ, (tān) anugṛhṇīyuḥ ca. Sukhīkaraṇa-duḥkhīkaraṇaṃ jñāsyanti, dharma-yuktāḥ ca (santaḥ) vyavavadiṣyanti janaṃ jānapadaṃ kimiti aihatraṃ ca, pāratraṃ ca ārādhayeyuḥ iti. Rajjukāḥ api arhanti praticalituṃ māṃ, puruṣān api me chandajñān praticaliṣyanti. Te (=puruṣāḥ) api ca enān (=rajjukān) vyavavadiṣyanti yena māṃ rajjukāḥ śakṣyanti ārādhayitum. Yathā hi prajāṃ vyaktāyai dhātryai niḥsṛjya (janaḥ) āśvastaḥ bhavati—vyaktā dhātrī śakṣyati me prajāṃ sukhaṃ parihartum—evaṃ mayā rajjukāḥ kṛtāḥ jānapadasya hita-sukhāya. Yena ete abhītāḥ āśvastāḥ santaḥ avimanasaḥ karmāṇi

petitions or (the conduct of) trials by the Rajjukas been made independent by me.

This indeed is desirable that there should be uniformity in judicial procedure as well as uniformity in sentences (passed).

And even as far as this do I grant (viz.)—to imprisoned persons whose trials are over (and) who have been sentenced to death,[4] a respite of three days is allowed by me.

(During this respite, their) relatives will (present an) appeal to them (the Rajjukas) to spare their (the prisoners') lives.[5]

But if there is none to (present such an) appeal, they (the prisoners) will give gifts for (earning merit in) the next world or will observe fasts.

(It is) indeed my desire that in this manner, even if time is limited,[6] they (the prisoners) may devote themselves to (matters) concerning the next world, and that men's various Dharma-practices, self-control and distribution of gifts may increase.

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1. See p. 29, also for the Puruṣas.
2. The exact meaning of *abhihāra* is not known and this rendering is conjectural on the analogy of *vyavahāra*, *upahāra* etc.
3. From **alaghaṃti* < **alahaṃti* < *arhanti*.
4. This shows that Aśoka did not abolish the capital punishment, see p. 38.
5. Probably on payment of a money fine.
6. The exact meaning of this clause is uncertain ; ='although their days are numbered' ? Some suggest 'although (their) hour (of death) is irrevocably fixed' or 'even when the time (of respite) has expired.'

pavatayevū ti, etena me lajūkānaṃ abhihāle va, daṃḍe vā ata-patiye kaṭe. Ichitaviye hi esā kiṃti viyohāla-samatā ca siya, daṃḍa-samatā cā. Ava ite pi ca me āvuti[7]—baṃdhana-badhānaṃ munisānaṃ tīlita-daṃḍānaṃ pata-vadhānaṃ timni divasāni me yote dimne. Nātikā va kāni nijhapayisaṃti jīvitāye tānaṃ. Nā saṃtaṃ vā nijhapayitā, dānaṃ dāhaṃti pālatikaṃ, upavāsaṃ va kachaṃti. Ichā hi me hevaṃ niludhasi pi kālasi pālataṃ ālādhayevū ti, janasa ca vaḍhati vividhe dhaṃma-calane saṃyame dana-savibhāge ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

pravartayeyuḥ iti, etena mayā rajjukānām abhihāraḥ vā, daṇḍaḥ vā ātma-patikaḥ kṛtaḥ. Eṣṭavyaṃ hi etat kimiti vyavahāra-samatā ca syāt, daṇḍa-samatā ca. Yāvat idam api ca me āvṛtiḥ—bandhana-baddhebhyaḥ manuṣyebhyaḥ tīrita[8]-daṇḍebhyaḥ prāpta-vadhebhyaḥ trayaḥ divasāḥ mayā yautaṃ[9] dattam. Jñātikāḥ vā enān (= rajjukān) nidhyāpayiṣyanti[10] jīvitāya teṣām (= prāpta-vadhānām). Na sati vā nidhyāpayitari, dānaṃ dāsyanti pāratrikam, upavāsaṃ vā kariṣyanti. Icchā hi me evaṃ niruddhe api kāle pāratram ārādhayeyuḥ iti, janasya ca vardhate vividhaṃ dharma-caraṇaṃ saṃyamaḥ dāna-saṃvibhāgaḥ iti.

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7. Probably from *ā√vṛ*, 'to fulfil, to grant (a wish).'
8. Cf. *santīraṇā* on p. 79, line 27.
9. Cf. *yautaka*, *°tuka*, 'a (special) gift, an exclusive possession' etc.
10. Cf. p. 81, note 5.

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *Prohibition of the killing of and infliction of pain on animals*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

(When I am) crowned twenty-six years, these various (animals) are declared by me inviolable, viz.—

Parrots, mainas, the aruṇa*, ruddy geese, wild ducks, the nandīmukha*, the gelāṭa*, bats, the ambā-kapīlikā*, small tortoises, boneless fish, the vedaveyaka*, the Gaṅgā-pupuṭaka*, the saṅkuja*-fish, large tortoises and porcupines (?), squirrels, young deer (?), bulls (?), the okapiṇḍa*, wild asses (?), white pigeons, village pigeons, (and) all quadrupeds which are neither useful nor edible.

Those she-goats, ewes and sows (which) are either with young or are giving milk (to their young), are inviolable, and (so) also (are) those (of their) young ones which are less than six months old.

Cocks are not to be caponised.

Husks containing living beings (i.e. insects) are not to be burnt.

Forests are not to be burnt, either uselessly or for killing (animals).

One animal is not to be fed with another animal.

On the three cāturmāsīs[1], on (these) three days during the Tiṣyā full-moon, (viz.)—the fourteenth, the fifteenth, (and) the first (*tithi*)—and invariably on every fast-day, fish are inviolable and are not to be sold.

On these very same days, those other classes of animals (that live) in elephant-parks (and) in fishermen's settlements, are also not to be slain.

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 5

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ ahā : saḍuvīsati-vasa-abhisitena me imāni jātāni[2] avadhiyāni kaṭāni, se yathā—suke sālikā alune cakavāke haṃse naṃdīmukhe gelāṭe jatūkā aṃbā-kapīlikā dalī anaṭhika-mache vedaveyake Gaṃgā-pupuṭake saṃkuja-mache kaphaṭa-sayake paṃna-sase simale saṃḍake okapiṃḍe palasate seta-kapote gāma-kapote, save catupade ye paṭibhogaṃ no eti, na ca khādiyatī. (Ajakā nāni),[3] elakā cā, sūkalī cā gabhinī va pāyamīnā va avadhiyā, potake pi ca kāni āsaṃmāsike. Vadhi-kukuṭe no kaṭaviye. Tuse sajīve no jhāpetaviye. Dāve anaṭhāye vā, vihisāye vā no jhāpetaviye. Jīvena jīve no pusitaviye. Tīsu cātuṃmāsīsu, tisāyaṃ puṃnamāsiyaṃ tiṃni divasāni—cāvudasaṃ paṃnaḍasaṃ paṭipadāye—dhuvāye cā anuposathaṃ mache avadhiye, no pi viketaviye. Etāni ye vā divasāni nāga-vanasi kevaṭa-bhogasi yāni aṃnāni pi jīva-nikāyāni no haṃtaviyāni.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha : ṣaḍviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā imāni jātāni avadhyāni kṛtāni, tat yathā—śukaḥ śārikā aruṇaḥ cakravākaḥ haṃsaḥ nandīmukhaḥ gelāṭaḥ jatūkaḥ ambā-pipīlikā dalī anasthika-matsyaḥ vedaveyakaḥ Gaṅgā-pupuṭakaḥ saṅkuja-matsyaḥ kamaṭha-śaryakau parṇa-śaśaḥ sṛmaraḥ ṣaṇḍakaḥ okapiṇḍaḥ parasvān śveta-kapotaḥ grāma-kapotaḥ, sarve catuṣpadāḥ ye pratibhogaṃ no yanti, na ca khādyante. (Ajakāḥ tāḥ), eḍakāḥ ca, śūkaryaḥ ca garbhiṇyaḥ vā pāyayamānāḥ vā avadhyāḥ, potakāḥ api ca ye asānmāsikāḥ. Vadhri-kukkutaḥ no kartavyaḥ. Tuṣaḥ sajīvaḥ no dāhayitavyaḥ. Dāvaḥ anarthāya vā, vihiṃsāyai vā no dāhayitavyaḥ. Jīvena jīvaḥ no poṣayitavyaḥ. Tisṛṣu cāturmāsīṣu, Taiṣāyāṃ purṇamāsyāṃ triṣu divaseṣu—caturdaśe pañcadaśe pratipadi—dhruvaṃ ca anūpavasathaṃ matsyaḥ avadhyaḥ, no api vikretavyaḥ. Etān yān eva divasān nāga-vane kaivarta-bhoge ye anye api jīva-nikāyāḥ, no hantavyāḥ.

On the eighth (*tithi*) of every (lunar) fortnight, on the fourteenth, on the fifteenth, on Tiṣyā, on Punarvasu, on the three cāturmāsīs, (and) on auspicious days, bulls are not to be castrated, (and) he-goats, rams, boars and other (animals) that are (usually) castrated, are not to be castrated.

On Tiṣyā, on Punarvasu, on the cāturmāsīs, (and) during the fortnight of (every) cāturmāsī, the branding of horses and bullocks is not to be done.

Till (I had been) crowned twenty-six years—during this period, prisoners were released by me twenty-five times.[4]

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*Identification of these is uncertain ; the *ambāk*°, some think, may be mother-ants, eaten as an aphrodisiac ; *parasvat*, some think, is the rhinoceros.

1. Full-moon after every four months, marking the three seasons, see p. 120, note 4. For Tiṣyā and Punarvasu, see pp. 13, 110, 112 and 118. The elephant-parks were probably the stables for war elephants.
2. See p. 114, note 6.

Aṭhamī-pakhāye cāvudasāye paṃnaḍasāye tisāye punāvasune, tīsu cātuṃmāsīsu, sudivasāye gone no nīlakhitaviye, ajake eḍake sūkale, e vā pi aṃne nīlakhiyati, no nīlakhitaviye. Tisāye punāvasune cātuṃmāsiye cātuṃmāsi-pakhāye asvasā gonasā lakhane no kaṭaviye. Yāva saḍuvīsati-vasa-abhisitena me etāye aṃtalikāye paṃnavīsati baṃdhana-mokhāni kaṭāni.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Aṣṭamī-pakṣe caturdaśyāṃ pañcadaśyāṃ Tiṣyāyāṃ Punarvasau, tisṛṣu cāturmāsīṣu, sudivase gauḥ no nirlakṣayitavyaḥ, ajakaḥ eḍakaḥ śūkaraḥ, yaḥ vā api anyaḥ nirlakṣyate, no nirlakṣayitavyaḥ. Tiṣyāyāṃ Punarvasau cāturmāsyāṃ cāturmāsī-pakṣe aśvasya goḥ lakṣaṇaṃ no kartavyaḥ. Yāvat ṣaḍviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktaṃ mayā etasyāṃ antarikāyāṃ pañcaviṃśatiḥ bandhana-mokṣāḥ kṛtāḥ.

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3. These two words, damaged at Delhi-Toprā, occur in three other versions.
4. See p. 19.

PILLAR EDICT 6

Date : *Regnal year 26 = c. 243 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka's object in writing the Dharma-rescripts*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

(When I had been) crowned twelve years, the Dharma-rescripts were caused to be written[1] by me for the welfare and happiness of the people, (in order that) not transgressing them (the rescripts), they might attain progress in Dharma in respect of those various matters.

'Thus (will be secured) the welfare and happiness of the people'—(to this) I direct (my) attention.

As (I do) this regarding (my) relatives, likewise (I do) regarding those who are near (and) likewise regarding those who are far away, (thinking) 'How I can bring them happiness', and accordingly I act.

In the same manner, I direct my attention to all classes (of the people).

All the (religious) sects too have been honoured by me with various (kinds of) honours.

But this, viz. going personally[2] (to others)—that is considered the best by me.

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by me, (when) crowned twenty-six years.

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1. The reference is to the time when Aśoka first commenced the inditing of the rescripts.
2. The meaning is not quite clear but probably it shows Aśoka's taking an active and zealous initiative in all matters considered good by him.

DELHI TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 6

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lāja hevaṃ ahā: duvāḍasa-vasa-abhisitena me dhaṃma-lipi likhāpitā lokasā hita-sukhāye, se taṃ apahaṭā[3] taṃ taṃ dhaṃma-vaḍhi pāpovā. Hevaṃ lokasā hita-sukhe ti paṭivekhāmi. Atha iyaṃ nātisu, hevaṃ paṭiyāsaṃnesu, hevaṃ apakaṭhesu—kimaṃ[4] kāni sukhaṃ avahāmī ti, tatha ca vidahāmi. Hemevā sava-nikāyesu paṭivekhāmi. Sava-pāsaṃḍā pi me pūjitā vividhāya pūjāyā. E cu iyaṃ atanā pacūpagamane, se me mokhya-mate. Saḍuvīsati-vasa-abhisitena me iyaṃ dhaṃma-lipi likhāpitā.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: dvādaśa-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā lokasya hita-sukhāya, saḥ tāṃ aprahartā tāṃ tāṃ dharma-vṛddhiṃ prāpnuyāt. Evaṃ lokasya hita-sukham iti prativīkṣe. Yathā idaṃ jñātiṣu, evaṃ pratyāsanneṣu, evam apakṛṣṭeṣu—kena (=kathaṃ) enān sukham āvahāmi iti, tathā ca vidadhāmi. Evameva sarva-nikāyeṣu prativīkṣe. Sarva-pārṣadāḥ api mayā pūjitāḥ vividhayā pūjayā. Yat tu idam ātmanā pratyupagamanaṃ, tat me mukhya-matam. Ṣaḍviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā.

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3. Probably from *a-pra√hṛ*, in the sense of 'not to hit or hurt' etc.

4. Some versions write *kiṃmaṃ*, taken by some as = the usual *kiṃti*, but it may possibly be = *kim*, 'what (happiness)', if not = *kena*, 'how, by what means'.

PILLAR EDICT 7

Date : *Regnal year 27 = c. 242 B.C.*
Subject : *Aśoka reviews his life-long Dharma activities*

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

The kings who were in times past, desired thus, (viz.) that the people might progress by the promotion of Dharma.

But the people did not progress by the adequate promotion of Dharma.

On this, the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

This occurred to me—

In times past too, the kings desired thus, (viz.) that the people might progress by the adequate promotion of Dharma.

But the people did not progress by the adequate promotion of Dharma.

Now, by what means would the people (be induced to) follow (the Dharma), by what means would the people (be made to) progress by the adequate promotion of Dharma, (and) by what means could I elevate them by the promotion of Dharma ?

On this, the Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

This occurred to me—

I shall cause Dharma proclamations to be announced[1], (and) shall order Dharma instructions (to be issued).

Hearing these, the people will follow (the Dharma), will elevate themselves, and will progress considerably by the promotion of Dharma.

DELHI-TOPRĀ TEXT OF PILLAR EDICT 7

Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: ye atikaṃtaṃ aṃtalaṃ lājāne husu, hevaṃ ichisu—kathaṃ jane dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā vaḍheyā. No cu jane anulupāyā dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā vaḍhithā. Etaṃ devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: esa me huthā—atikaṃtaṃ ca aṃtalaṃ hevaṃ ichisu lājāne kathaṃ jane anulupāyā dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā vaḍheyā ti. No ca jane anulupāyā dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā vaḍhithā. Se kinasu jane anupaṭipajeyā, kinasu jane anulupāyā dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā vaḍheyā ti, kinasu kāni abhyuṃnāmayehaṃ dhamma-vaḍhiyā ti. Etaṃ devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: esa me huthā—dhaṃma-sāvanāni sāvāpayāmi, dhaṃmānusathini anusāsāmi. Etaṃ jane sutu anupaṭīpajīsati abhyuṃnamisati, dhaṃma-vaḍhiyā ca bāḍhaṃ vaḍhisati.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: ye atikrāntam antaraṃ rājānaḥ abhūvan, (te) evam aiṣiṣuḥ—kathaṃ janaḥ dharma-vṛddhyā vardheta. No tu janaḥ anurūpayā dharma-vṛddhyā avardhiṣṭa. Etasmin devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: etat me abhūt—atikrāntaṃ ca antaram evam aiṣiṣuḥ rājānaḥ kathaṃ janaḥ anurūpayā dharma-vṛddhyā vardheta iti. No ca janaḥ anurūpayā dharma-vṛddhyā avardhiṣṭa. Tat kenasvit janaḥ (dharmam) anupratipadyeta, kenasvit janaḥ anurūpayā dharma-vṛddhyā vardheta iti, kenasvit tān (=janān) abhyunnāmayeyaṃ dharma-vṛddhyā iti. Etasmin devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: etat me abhūt—dharma-śrāvaṇāni śrāvayāmi, dharmānuśastīḥ anuśāsmi. Etāni janaḥ śrutvā (dharmam) anupratipatsyate abhyunnaṃsyati, dharma-vṛddhyā ca bāḍhaṃ vardhiṣyate.

21

For this purpose, Dharma proclamations were caused to be announced by me, (and) manifold Dharma instructions were ordered, in order that (my) officers[2] too, who are occupied among many people, would advocate as well as explain them in detail.

The Rajjukas too are occupied among many hundred thousands of people.

They too were ordered by me (thus)—'In such and such manner exhort ye the people, being (yourselves) devoted to the Dharma'.

The Beloved of the gods, Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

Having this very (object) in view, I set up Dharma pillars[3], appointed Dharma-Mahāmātras, (and) announced Dharma proclamations.

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

Also, on the roads banyan trees were caused to be planted by me, (in order that) they would provide shade for animals and men, (and) mango groves were caused to be planted.

Also, at intervals of eight[4] *krośas*, wells were caused to be dug by me and rest-houses were caused to be built, (and) numerous drinking-places were caused to be constructed by me at various places for the use of animals and men[5].

But of little avail indeed are these utilities.

With various comforts indeed were the people made happy by former kings as also by me.

'Let them follow these Dharma practices'—for this purpose were these done by me.

Etāye me aṭhāye dhaṃma-sāvanāni sāvāpitāni, dhaṃmānusathini vividhāni ānapitāni yathā pulisā pi bahune janasi āyatā e, te paliyovadisaṃti pi, pavithalisaṃti pi. Lajūkā pi bahukesu pāna-sata-sahasesu āyatā. Te pi me ānapitā—hevaṃ ca hevaṃ ca paliyovadātha janaṃ dhaṃma-yutaṃ. Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi hevaṃ āhā: etameva me anuvekhamāne dhaṃma-thaṃbhāni kaṭāni, dhaṃma-mahāmātā kaṭā, dhaṃma-sāvane kaṭe. Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: magesu pi me nigohāni lopāpitāni—chāyopagāni hosaṃti pasu-munisānaṃ, aṃbā-vaḍikyā lopāpitā. Aḍha-kosikyāni pi me udupānāni khānāpāpitāni, niṃsiḍhayā ca kālāpitā, āpānāni me bahukāni tata tata kālāpitāni paṭībhogāye pasu-munisānaṃ. Lahuke cu esa paṭībhoge nāma. Vividhāyā hi sukhāyanāyā pulimehi pi lājīhi, mamayā ca sukhayite loke. Imaṃ cu dhaṃmānupaṭīpatī anupaṭīpajaṃtu ti, etadathā me esa kaṭe.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Etasmai mayā arthāya dharma-śrāvaṇāni śrāvitāni, dharmānuśastayaḥ vividhāḥ ājñaptāḥ, yathā puruṣāḥ api bahuṣu janeṣu āyatāḥ ye, tāni paryavavadiṣyanti api, pravistārayiṣyanti api. Rajjukāḥ api bahukeṣu prāṇa-śata-sahasreṣu āyatāḥ. Te api mayā ajñaptāḥ—evaṃ ca evaṃ ca paryavavadata janaṃ dharma-yuktam (=yuktāḥ yūyaṃ santaḥ). Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī evam āha: etadeva mayā anuvīkṣamāṇena dharma-stambhāḥ kṛtāḥ, dharma-mahāmātrāḥ kṛtāḥ, dharma-śrāvaṇaṃ kṛtam. Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: mārgeṣu api mayā nyagrodhāḥ ropitāḥ—chāyopagāḥ bhaviṣyanti paśu-manuṣyāṇām, āmra-vāṭikāḥ ropitāḥ. Āṣṭa-krośikāni api mayā udapānāni khānitāni, niṣadyāḥ ca kāritāḥ, āpānāni mayā bahukāni tatra tatra kāritāni pratibhogāya paśu-manuṣyāṇām. Laghukāḥ tu ete pratibhogāḥ nāma. Vividhaiḥ hi sukhīkaraṇaiḥ pūrvaiḥ api rājabhiḥ, mayā ca sukhīkṛtaḥ lokaḥ. Imāṃ tu dharmānupratipattim anupratipadyantāṃ (janāḥ) iti, etadarthāya mayā etāni kṛtāni.

The Beloved of the gods, Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

They, my Dharma-Mahāmātras too are occupied with various kinds of beneficent objects, and they are also occupied among all the sects of ascetics as well as of householders.

Concerning the affairs of the Saṃgha[6] too, (this) has been ordered by me—'They (the Dharma-Mahāmātras) shall be occupied.'

Likewise concerning the Brāhmaṇas (and) the Ājīvikas too, (this) has been ordered by me—'They shall be occupied.'

Concerning the Nirgranthas too, (this) has been ordered by me—'They shall be occupied.'

Concerning various (other) sects too, (this) has been ordered by me—'They shall be occupied—different Mahāmātras for the particular affairs of different sects.'

And my Dharma-Mahāmātras are occupied with these (sects) as well as with all the other sects.

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

These as well as many other principal (officers) are occupied with the distribution of gifts, of mine as well as of the queens.

And in all my female apartments, they organise[7] in manifold ways various charitable activities, here[8] as well as in the provinces.

In respect of (the distribution of the gifts of my) sons and of the sons of other queens[9] too, (this) has been ordered by me—'They shall be occupied with the distribution of (their) gifts'.

[10][The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :]

Devānampiye Piyadasi hevaṃ āhā : dhaṃma-mahāmātā pi me te bahu-vidhesu aṭhesu ānugahikesu viyāpaṭāse[11], pavajitānaṃ ceva gihithānaṃ ca sava-pāsaṃḍesu pi ca viyāpaṭāse. Saṃghaṭhasi pi me kaṭe—ime viyāpaṭā hohaṃti ti. Hemeva bābhanesu Ājīvikesu pi me kaṭe—ime viyāpaṭā hohaṃti ti. Nigaṃṭhesu pi me kaṭe—ime viyāpaṭā hohaṃti. Nānā-pāsaṃḍesu pi me kaṭe—ime viyāpaṭā hohaṃti ti—paṭivisiṭhaṃ paṭīvisiṭhaṃ tesu tesu te te mahāmātā. Dhaṃma-mahāmātā cu me etesu ceva viyāpaṭā, savesu ca aṃnesu pāsaṃḍesu. Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā : ete ca aṃne ca bahukā mukhā dāna-visagasi viyāpaṭāse, mama ceva devinaṃ ca. Savasi ca me olodhanasi te bahu-vidhena ākālena tāni tāni tuṭhāyatanāni paṭī.......... hida ceva disāsu ca. Dālakānaṃ pi ca me kaṭe, aṃnānaṃ ca devi-kumālānaṃ—ime dāna-visagesu viyāpaṭā hohaṃti ti

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī evam āha : dharma-mahāmātrāḥ api me te bahu-vidheṣu artheṣu ānugrahikeṣu vyāpṛtāḥ, pravrajitānāṃ caiva gṛhasthānāṃ ca sarva-pārṣadeṣu api ca vyāpṛtāḥ. Saṃghārthe api mayā kṛtam—ime vyāpṛtāḥ bhaviṣyanti iti. Evameva brāhmaṇeṣu Ājīvikeṣu api mayā kṛtam—ime vyāpṛtāḥ bhaviṣyanti iti. Nirgrantheṣu api mayā kṛtam—ime vyāpṛtāḥ bhaviṣyanti. Nānā-pārṣadeṣu api mayā kṛtam—ime vyāpṛtāḥ bhaviṣyanti iti—prativiśiṣṭaṃ prativiśiṣṭaṃ teṣu teṣu te te mahāmātrāḥ. Dharma-mahāmātrāḥ ca me eteṣu caiva vyāpṛtāḥ, sarveṣu ca anyeṣu pārṣadeṣu. Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha : ete ca anye ca bahukāḥ mukhyāḥ dāna-visarge vyāpṛtāḥ, mama caiva devīnāṃ ca. Sarveṣu ca me avarodhaneṣu te bahu-vidhena ākāreṇa tāni tāni tuṣṭyāyatanāni pratiṣṭhāpayanti (?), iha caiva diśāsu ca. Dārakāṇām api ca mayā kṛtam, anyeṣāṃ ca devī-kumārāṇām—ime dāna-visargeṣu vyāpṛtāḥ bhaviṣyanti iti

For the purpose of (promoting) noble deeds of Dharma and for the practice of Dharma, [Dharma-proclamations and Dharma-rescripts were ordered by me].

These indeed are the noble deeds of Dharma and the practice of Dharma, viz.—'Thus will increase (the practice) by the people of these (virtues), viz.—compassion, charity, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness'.

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

Whatever good deeds have been performed by me, those the people accept (and) those they also practise.

Thereby has been promoted and will be promoted that which is respectfulness towards mother and father, that which is respectfulness towards elders, that which is deference to the aged, (and), that which is proper behaviour towards Brāhmaṇas and ascetics, towards the poor and the unfortunate, (and) even towards slaves and servants.

The Beloved of the gods, King Priyadarśin, spoke thus :

And this progress of men in the Dharma has been promoted by both of these (two) means, (viz.) by Dharma regulations as well as by persuasion.

But of these (two means), of little avail (have been) the Dharma regulations, (whereas) by persuasion indeed (has been effected) much more.

Now, these are the Dharma regulations, (viz.) as it has been ordered by me—'These various (animals) are inviolable.'

And many too (are the) other Dharma regulations that have been ordered by me.

But it is by persuasion indeed, that men's progress in the Dharma has been promoted to a much greater extent in

dhaṃmāpadānaṭhāye dhaṃmānupaṭipatiye. Esa hi dhaṃmāpadāne dhaṃma-paṭīpati ca—yā iyaṃ—dayā dāne sace socave madave sādhave ca lokasa hevaṃ vaḍhisati ti. Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: yāni hi kānici mamiyā sādhavāni kaṭāni, taṃ loke anupaṭīpaṃne, taṃ ca anuvidhiyaṃti. Tena vaḍhitā ca, vaḍhisaṃti ca mātā-pitisu sususā yā, gulusu sususā yā, vayo-mahālakānaṃ anupaṭīpati yā, bābhana-samanesu kapana-valākesu āva dāsa-bhaṭakesu saṃpaṭīpati yā. Devānaṃpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: munisānaṃ cu yā iyaṃ dhaṃma-vaḍhi vaḍhitā duvehi yeva ākālehi—dhaṃma-niyamena ca, nijhatiyā[12] ca. Tata cu lahu se dhaṃma-niyame, nijhatiyā va bhuye. Dhaṃma-niyame cu kho esa, ye me iyaṃ kaṭe—imāni ca imāni jātāni[13] avadhiyāni. Aṃnāni pi cu bahukāni dhaṃma-niyamāni yāni me kaṭāni. Nijhatiyā va cu bhuye munisānaṃ dhaṃma-vaḍhi vaḍhitā

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

......(?)......dharmāvadānārthāya dharmānupratipattaye. Etat hi dharmāvadānaṃ dharma-pratipattiḥ ca, yāni imāni —dayā dānaṃ satyaṃ śaucaṃ mārdavaṃ sādhavaṃ ca lokasya evaṃ vardhiṣyante iti. Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha—yāni hi kānicit mayā sādhavāni kṛtāni, tāni lokaḥ anupratipannaḥ, tāni ca anuvidadhati. Tena vardhitāḥ ca vardhiṣyante ca mātā-pitṛṣu śuśrūṣā yā, guruṣu śuśrūṣā yā, vayo-mahallakānām anupratipattiḥ yā, brāhmaṇa-śramaṇeṣu kṛpaṇa-varākeṣu yāvat dāsa-bhṛtakān sampratipattiḥ yā. Devānāṃpriyaḥ Priyadarśī rājā evam āha: manuṣyāṇāṃ ca yā iyaṃ dharma-vṛddhiḥ vardhitā dvābhyām eva ākārābhyāṃ—dharma-niyamena ca, nidhyātyā ca. Tatra tu laghuḥ saḥ dharma-niyamaḥ, nidhyātyā eva bhūyaḥ. Dharma-niyamaḥ ca khalu eṣaḥ, yat mayā idaṃ kṛtam—imāni ca imāni jātāni avadhyāni. Anye api ca bahukāḥ dharma-niyamāḥ ye mayā kṛtāḥ. Nidhyātyā eva tu bhūyaḥ manuṣyāṇāṃ dharma-vṛddhiḥ vardhitā

respect of non-injury to living beings (and) in respect of non-killing of animals.

[14]Concerning this, the Beloved of the gods said :

Wherever there are either stone-pillars or stone-slabs, thereon this Dharma-rescript is to be engraved, so that it may long endure.

Now, for this purpose has this been engraved that it may last as long as (my) sons and great-grandsons (shall live and) as long as the moon and the sun (shall shine), and that men may practise (it) as instructed.

By practising (it) thus, (happiness) in this and in the next (world) is indeed attained.

This Dharma-rescript has been caused to be written by me (when) crowned twenty-seven years.

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1. See p. 20.
2. See p. 29, also for the Rajjukas in the next clause.
3. Some think that the *dharma-stambhas* refer to the stūpas and *caityas* erected by Aśoka.
4. For *aḍha* here, this is perhaps better than 'half'. The maximum distance of a *krośa* being about 3 miles, wells and rest-houses at intervals of half a *krośa* would be too lavish a convenience. An Aśokan *krośa* was probably a little over a mile.
5. Noticeable in this account of Aśoka's charitable activities is the absence of any reference to the hospitals of RE 2.
6. See pp. 29 ff.
7. Some would render the damaged word *paṭi....* as *pratipādayanti*, 'point out', or as *prativedayanti*, 'report'; and *tuṣṭyāyatanāni* as '(suitable) objects or recipients (of charities)'.
8. In Pāṭaliputra, see p. 28.

avihiṃsāye bhutānaṃ, anālaṃbhāye pānānaṃ. Etaṃ devānaṃpiye āhā: iyaṃ dhaṃma-libi ata athi silā-thaṃbhāni vā, silā-phalakāni vā tata kaṭaviyā, ena esa cila-ṭhitike siyā. Se etāye athāye iyaṃ kaṭe—putā-papotike caṃdama-suliyike hotu ti, tathā ca anupaṭīpajaṃtu ti. Hevaṃ hi anupaṭīpajaṃtaṃ hidata-pālate āladhe hoti. Saṭavisati-vasābhisitena me iyaṃ dhaṃma-libi likhāpāpitā ti.

TEXT SANSKRITIZED

avihiṃsāyai bhūtānām, anālambhāya prāṇānām. Etasmin Devānāṃpriyaḥ āha: iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ yatra santi śilā-stambhāḥ vā, śilā-phalakāni vā tatra kartavyā, yena eṣā cira-sthitikā syāt. Tat etasmai arthāya iyaṃ (dharṃa-lipiḥ) kṛtā—pautra-prāpautrikī cāndramaḥ-sauryikī bhavatu iti, tathā ca (imāṃ dharma-lipiṃ janāḥ) anupratipadyantām iti. Evaṃ hi anupratipadyamāne (jane) aihatra-pāratram ārāddhaṃ bhavati. Saptaviṃśati-varṣābhiṣiktena mayā iyaṃ dharma-lipiḥ lekhitā iti.

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9. See p. 16.

10. These words as also those enclosed within square brackets in the next clause, were probably left out by the engraver, for otherwise what follows appears to be out of context.

11. The significance of the ending *-āse* is not clear; it is taken by some as the equivalent of the Vedic nominative plural in *-āsaḥ*.

12. Cf. p. 81, note 5.

13. See p. 114, note 6 and p. 155, line 2.

14. The clause 'Concerning.....endure' was first written by the engraver at the very end of the edict, but by subsequent special marks he indicated its correct sequence as adopted here.

CORRIGENDA

Page	*line*	*for*	*read*
3	1	Mṇḍagiri	Maṇḍ°
19	4	it	is
20	1	Inscription	°tions
„	*last*	issu	issue
27	9 *from bottom*	Tāmraparṇīs	°parṇī
61	6	khubhā	ku°
69	12	prāḍeśikāḥ	prāde°
„	18	vyañjanatah	°taḥ
76	2 *from bottom*	respect	respect,
81	3 *from bottom*	meditate'	meditate',
85	1 *of Text Sansk.*	yatrāṃ	yā°
87	14	danaṃ	dānaṃ
91	3 *of Text Sansk.*	śuśrūsāṃ	°ṣāṃ
93	9	dhamma	dhaṃma
103	5 *of Text Sansk.*	nāṃa	nāma
„	6 *of Text Sansk.*	Pāṇdyāḥ	Pāṇḍ°
131	2	samghasi	saṃ°
137	*headline*	Edict	Edict : Introduction
141	18	47	9 and 41

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